SKELMERSDALE
Champion

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School strikes gold in games award scheme

Football club chief makes new plea for support

SUPREME COURT RULES IN FAVOUR OF WHITEMOSS

Controversial hazardous waste landfill site extension set to go ahead after campaigners refused permission to appeal

Report by **Henry James**

A CONTROVERSIAL extension to Skelmersdale's Whitemoss hazardous waste landfill site can now be built after campaigners lost their case at the Supreme Court.

The court refused permission to hear the appeal against the proposals which will see 150,000 tonnes of hazardous waste brought to the site on White Moss Road South annually.

The extension plans were originally approved by the Government in 2015 but since then members of campaign group ARROW (Action to Reduce and Recycle Our Waste) have mounted a number of legal challenges to the Secretary of State's decision.

ARROW have been critical of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) system by which the proposals were passed. They say it "bypasses local authority scrutiny and opposition."

But Whitemoss bosses have said they can now move forward with their plans.

Nicola Escott of ARROW said: "This ruling means that Whitemoss Ltd. do not need to prove their site is needed and can carry on landfilling material that experts say can be recycled or treated more sustainably."

Councillor Nicola Pryce-Roberts, borough councillor for the Skelmersdale South ward, added: "West Lancashire Borough Council was unanimous in its opposition to the Whitemoss expansion. That counted for nothing.

"And Lancashire County Council determined that Whitemoss was not needed when they considered the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Plan in 2012.

"The local community, including parish councils where they exist who will be most affected by the continuation and expansion of Whitemoss, have in both words and deeds continually expressed that they also do not want Whitemoss.

"This has been imposed on the community from central government via the central planning process, for the benefit of a private company. Every community throughout the country should be mindful of that.

"The three tiers of democracy (county, borough and parish) with locally accountable, elected representatives are not considered relevant. Nor it seems are the wishes of the landowners adjacent to the dump."

Del Ellis of ARROW commented: "We need to continue with this campaign and there are still other possible legal avenues that could be explored. We are indebted for the continued support of individuals, businesses and organisations that have stood with us to protect our community against potential harm from this facility."

West Lancs MP, Rosie Cooper, said: "This is further disappointing news for residents of Skelmersdale and West Lancashire, the ARROW campaign group and local democracy. Both West Lancs Council and Lancashire County Council have been against this application, as have residents of Skelmersdale, yet the Government and the courts decide to ride roughshod over local opinion and democracy.

An aerial shot of Whitemoss hazardous waste landfill site

"I will continue to work with residents and ARROW to consider what options are now available to pursue in order to safeguard the health of local residents."

Rob Routledge, managing director of Whitemoss Landfill Ltd., responded: "We are pleased that the formal legal process has now concluded. The Supreme Court's decision was that ARROW's case was 'unarguable'. This clear and unequivocal ruling means we can now move forward with our plans, which will help ensure that much-needed homes can be built on former brownfield sites, more recycling of wastes and more carbon-neutral generation of electricity.

"There has been no use of compulsory purchase powers to allow the construction of the landfill. We are a family company, employing local people and supporting community projects. We look forward to continuing doing that for many years to come."

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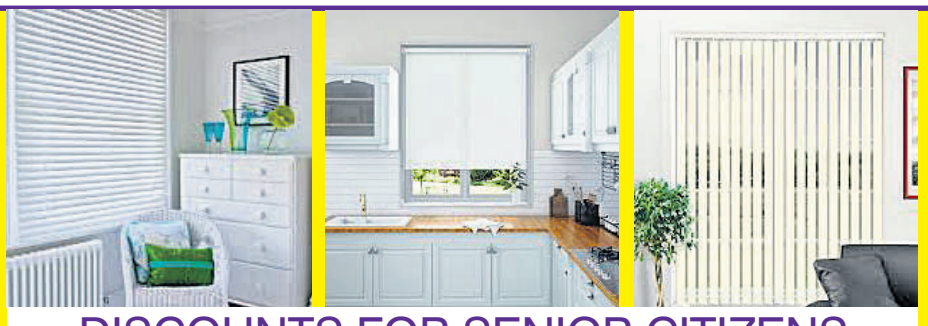
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MP seeks reassurance about future of school rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted inspectors

Report by **Kenny Parker**

WEST Lancs MP Rosie Cooper has called on Lancashire County County to outline how it plans to protect the education of pupils at a school rated 'inadequate' by Government inspectors.

Burscough Priory Science College was given the rating following an Ofsted report prompting the Regional Schools Commissioner to order that it be converted into a sponsored academy.

Ms Cooper said: "Burscough Priory's 'inadequate' Ofsted rating is another blow to education provision here in West Lancashire. In the light of this poor rating, I have asked Lancashire County Council to outline the urgent action it intends to take to improve the school's performance, protecting pupils' education.

"This rating comes on the back of the poor Ofsted and Care Quality Commission report on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision across Lancashire and requires serious questions to be answered by Lancashire County Council, the education authority.

"I have raised both these serious issues with the county council and will be raising the issue of high school provision in West Lancashire with the Education Secretary."

Rosie Cooper at Burscough Priory Science College - the MP has voiced parents' concerns following the school's recent 'inadequate' rating by Government inspectors

The MP says parents have contacted her with concerns about Burscough Priort being converted into an academy.

She said: "In support of the many pupils, parents and staff who have contacted me concerned and distressed at the proposal to change the status of Burscough Priory, I have written to the Regional Schools Commissioner and the school to seek clarification about the process, criteria and timetable to be used in finding and appointing a suitable sponsor.

"If the decision is taken to proceed with applying for academy status I am concerned about the real level of engagement and consultation that will take place with local partners, agencies, residents, pupils and parents.

"If academisation of Burscough Priory is seen to be inevitable, it is essential that a high-quality education provider is appointed with the absolute aim of driving up educational standards.

"The school and the education authority needs to be open and transparent in their dealings and fully consult and communicate with all interested parties in this proposal."

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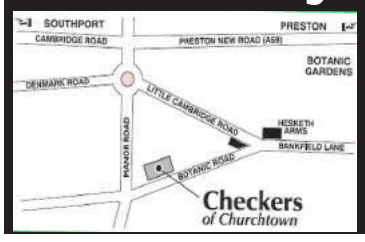

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Football club chief in renewed appeal for support

Report by **Henry James**

OFFICIALS of Skelmersdale United have issued a renewed plea for townsfolk to support a fundraising campaign to help secure the immediate future of the 135-year-old club.

A Just Giving page set up in November aimed at raising £10,000 to fund Skem's ground-share arrangement at Prescot Cables' ground for the rest of the season realised nearly £3,000 in a matter of days.

However, since then the donations have dried up and the total now stand at just £3,771 leaving it more than £6,000 adrift of its target.

Skelmersdale United chairman, Paul Griffiths, said: "It has been a massive struggle and we need the support of the local population and local businesses to help us raise £10,000.

"If we can raise the next £6,000 and reach that £10,000 target, the club will be able to pay for the ground hire at Prescot Cables. Then all we have got to do is cover the players' expenses.

Crowds down

"It is going to be a push to see the season out and we will have to survive hand-to-mouth every week, but I am sure that more or less we will get through by the skin of our teeth."

The chairman added that the groundshare at Prescot has been a success, despite a drop in attendances.

"During the three months we have been at Prescot our crowds are down. We used to have gates of 220 to 230 at our old home ground but at Prescot they have fallen to 140 to 150.

"Also, last season every home match was sponsored, but this season only five have been supported, although we do want to thank the likes of Messenger Express for their support.

"We have also lost out with not having the clubhouse.

"On the weekend we had to leave our old club we had a wedding reception booked for the club. This had to be moved and I know that the venue where it was eventually held took £5,000 behind the bar for that one event."

Mr Griffiths added that he aims to bring the club back to Skelmersdale as soon as possible.

If you would like to support the club's appeal go to the website www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/sufc1882.

Skem chairman Paul Griffiths

Expansion plans for hospital A&E

Funding secured for state-of-the-art module building

Report by **Danielle Thompson**

SOUTHPORT Hospital's A&E department, which is used by adults in West Lancashire requiring emergency treatment, is set to be expanded after health chiefs secured funding to attach a state-of-the-art 'module' to the existing building.

The new unit will increase the number of patients who can be seen and treated, and will hopefully reduce waiting times as well as easing the pressure on admissions at busy periods.

Its arrival should also help reduce 'ambulance stacking' at the hospital.

The go-ahead for the upgrade will ease mounting concerns that Southport will lose its A&E capability to another hospital should any reorganisation plans be forthcoming.

Southport and Ormskirk NHS Hospital Trust were tightlipped about the 'module' plans when approached by the Champion but we understand from sources that the trust has been awarded funding for the project to get underway and are in the process of finalising details for the expansion.

Last month, the Government announced that an additional £1.3m grant is to be given to the trust to help it cope with winter pressures. The extra funding is part of an immediate £337m boost for NHS hospitals this winter.

In February last year, Southport A&E department was one of 24 casualty units across the country that were marked for potential closure or significant downgrading as part of national NHS cost-cutting measures, sparking fears that patients would be at serious risk travelling further afield for emergency treatment.

Southport Hospital's A&E - set to be expanded

In 2003, the children's A&E unit at Southport Hospital was closed, meaning children and teenagers aged up to 18 have to travel to Ormskirk for emergency care.

Adults living in West Lancashire need to travel to Southport for urgent treatment.

Although the trust declined to confirm a 'module' was to be sited at Southport Hospital, Therese Patten, chief operating officer, told us: "We are delighted to have received additional funds to invest in improvements to the Accident and Emergency department at Southport Hospital.

"These will benefit both patients and the staff who care for them."

A spokesperson for the trust added: "We will issue further details about the plans later this month."

The spokesperson confirmed, when asked, that the funds they had obtained were to be used for an additional A&E building.

The Champion understands a number of specialist firms have already tendered for the project. The companies are experts in providing fast-track modular healthcare buildings which use modern methods of construction and are an innovative alternative to a traditional construction but in a fraction of the time.

Although full details of the Southport project are yet to be revealed, the modules can be delivered to site by crane and can provide an almost instant set-up for patient care.

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Ron Whittle presents the cheque for £500 to Jill Boardman

Car enthusiasts present £500 donation to Twinkle House

A SKELMERSDALE-based charity has received a £500 boost - courtesy of a group of sports car enthusiasts.

Members of the West Lancashire MG Owners Club voted at their annual general meeting to donate the proceeds of their annual charity collection to three local causes, including Twinkle House.

The charity, based in Gorsey Place, East Gillibrands, provides free support sessions for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs.

The West Lancashire MG Owners club is now in its 39th year and has more than 70 members who meet monthly at the Briars Hall Hotel in Lathom for activiites including talks, quizzes, charity auctions, and games nights, plus raffles for charity.

This year a total of £2,000 was raised for charity, the highest in the club's history.

Committee member, Ron Whittle went along to Twinkle House to present a cheque for £500 to the charity's chief executive, Jill Boardman.

'Bring back our wheelchairs' plea

AN appeal has been launched calling on members of the public to return wheelchairs, which are no longer being used, to the NHS in a bid to save much-needed resources.

It is estimated that 300 wheelchairs and expensive pressure relief cushions - worth in excess of £250,000 - have not been returned and instead are either thrown away, given to charity shops or even sold in car boot sales!

And Ormskirk and Skelmersdale have been listed as 'hot spots' in the region for the problem.

Now members of the public across West Lancashire are being urged to telephone a special hotline number 01695 556 492, so that staff can go out to collect the unused wheelchairs.

Frustration

The 300 missing wheelchairs are each valued between £300 and £1,500.

In addition, there are a handful of battery-powered wheelchairs which are each worth as much as £2,000.

Yvonne Baron, wheelchair service manager, at Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust, said: "The NHS is losing out on thousands of pounds worth of wheelchairs each year.

"It is a great source of frustration to staff that the NHS has to spend cash replacing items not returned.

"We would urge patients or family members who no longer need their NHS wheelchair to telephone the hotline number and we will arrange for one of our engineers to go out and collect them at a convenient time to you."

Trip to Paris to be won

THE Concourse Shopping Centre is offering shoppers the chance to win a trip to Paris - courtesy of Thomas Cook - simply by guessing the number of padlocks contained in the box, situated in East Square, near the Thomas Cook shop.

The winner will receive a three-night city break for two in Paris, staying at a three or four-star hotel, on a bed and breakfast basis, and including travel by Eurostar.

The competition, run in conjunction with Wish FM, will run from Friday, February 9 to Tuesday, February 13 and the winner will be announced live on Wish FM on Valentine's Day.

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Police and charity team up in bid to halt online viewing of sexual images of children

Report by **Kenny Parker**

POLICE in Lancashire, together with forces from Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Cumbria and North Wales, are joining forces with a leading child protection charity in a campaign to tackle growing demand for sexual images of children online.

The regional campaign represents a multi-agency approach to tackling the problem, bringing together robust law enforcement with work already being undertaken by UK child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation.

The charity works to prevent people from viewing such illegal material in the first place; and to get them to stop if they have already started. It directs offenders to the charity's Stop it Now! Get Help website that hosts online self-help resources, as well as a confidential helpline (0808 1000 900) where they can get help to address their online behaviour.

Viewing and sharing indecent images of children online is a serious and growing problem. In 2013 the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) estimated that as many as 50,000 individuals in the UK were involved in downloading or sharing sexual images of children.

Police estimate that the number of offenders has grown since then. In an interview in 2016, National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Lead for Child Protection, Chief Constable Simon Bailey, said that at least 100,000 people across the UK were now regularly viewing online sexual images of children.

The campaign will use traditional media, social media, posters and other activities to:

- Raise public awareness of the growing problem of people viewing and sharing sexually explicit images of under 18s online.
- Educate those offending about the harm caused to children in the images who are re-victimised each time their image is viewed online.
- Highlight the increase in police activity in Lancashire to tackle the issue.
- Drive home the consequences of their behaviour to offenders - including arrest, possible imprisonment, break-up of family and being put on the sex offenders register.
- Make people aware that there is help available to stop such behaviour.

A similar campaign, run by the charity and police in Scotland resulted in a 72% increase in the number of people seeking help to address their online behaviour. It is hoped that the campaign in the North West will have a similar effect.

Jo Edwards, head of serious crime at Lancashire Constabulary, said: "As a police service we have a duty to protect children from harm and to deter individuals from committing these types of horrific offences and we will continue to seek to identify and convict those individuals who wish to share indecent images and engage with children online for sexual gratification.

"But we also recognise the need to educate and stop individuals from continuing to offend, or prevent individuals from offending in the first place.

"Our partnership with the Lucy Faithfull Foundation plays a key role in this, providing an online space in which to signpost individuals who are offending or about to offend, to recognise the consequences of their actions and to seek support."

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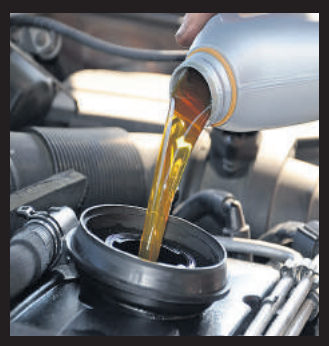

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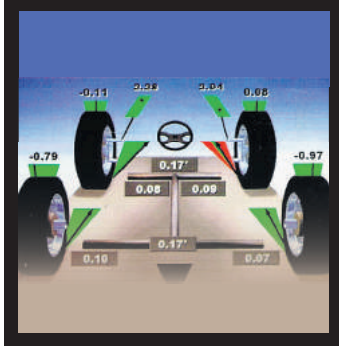

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Ports group's chief executive appointed to chair board at West Lancashire College

Report by **Henry James**

'Attracting someone of Mark's calibre speaks volumes about ambition'

MARK Whitworth, chief executive of one of the UK's biggest port groups, Peel Ports, has been appointed as the chair of the board at West Lancashire College.

The college, based in Skelmersdale, is part of NCG, one of the largest not-for-profit education and training groups in the UK.

Mark's role as chair of the college board will include oversight of relationships with stakeholders, ensuring that the college maintains a broad and balanced curriculum offer that is responsive to local needs. He will also monitor the quality of provision delivered to learners.

He said: "I live locally and have visited the college several times previously, so I'm well aware of the excellent facilities and courses it offers.

"As the chief executive of a large employer, I also understand the skills and abilities we're looking for in the next generation of talent, who will deliver and lead our services in years to come.

Mark Whitworth, chief executive of Peel Ports and new chair of the board at West Lancashire College

Potential

"There's no doubt West Lancashire College can make a real difference to learners, employers and the local community.

"I'm looking forward to meeting students and staff in the coming weeks and helping everyone associated with the college reach their full potential."

Denise Williamson, principal of West Lancashire College, commented: "This is a really fabulous appointment for the college and I am sure that we will benefit from Mark's experience, alongside the support and expertise of our existing board members, as we move forward."

And Joe Docherty, chief executive of NCG, added: "Creating partnerships between education and business is a vital part of our work, helping employers to invest in their workforce and unlocking the potential of people starting or developing their career.

"Attracting someone of Mark's calibre as chair of the college board speaks volumes about the ambition of West Lancashire College.

"Mark's insights and leadership will be extremely valuable as we continue supporting individuals and organisations towards success."

Since his appointment as Peel Ports chief executive in 2010 Mark has overseen a £1bn investment programme, which includes L2, the new deep sea container terminal in Liverpool, and the acquisition of Great Yarmouth Port in East Anglia.

Mark started his career with Marks & Spencer before moving to Speedy Hire plc in 1995 where he held several leadership and board roles. In 2006 he joined Peel Airports Group as CEO.

In addition to his role as chief executive, he is also a member of the Peel Group board and a director of the UK Major Ports Group board.

MP dismisses deselection claim

ROSIE Cooper has dismissed claims that the left-wing Labour activist group, Momentum, is planning to deselect MPs opposed to Jeremy Corbyn's leadership.

The West Lancs MP was commenting following a national newspaper article which claimed there was a 'deselection hit list' of MPs who were critical of Mr Corbyn, including Hilary Benn and Angela Eagle.

Asked by the Champion for her views on the report, Ms Cooper said: "I really don't take any notice of political rumours.

"I have had the great privilege to have served the people of West Lancashire as their Labour MP approaching 13 years now, having been selected then re-selected twice. And having fought and won four successive general elections, each time increasing my votes, there is only ever one priority for me and that is to fight for what matters to the people of West Lancashire."

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Guests and volunteers at the "Time to Talk - Time to Change' event organised by Skelmersdale P.U.L.S.E

Volunteer group stage 'Time to Talk' event as part of national mental health initiative

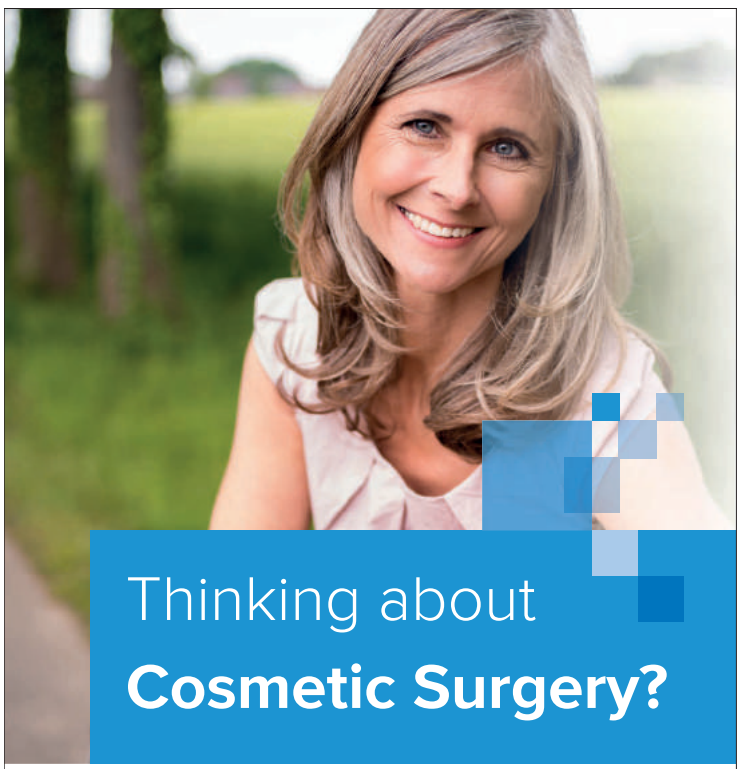
VOLUNTEERS from Skelmersdale P.U.L.S.E (the People's Umbrella for Learning, Socialisation and Empowerment) held a 'Time to Talk - Time to Change' event at the Concourse shopping centre at which people were encouraged to chat about mental health issues.

A number of other organisations took part in the event, including Imago Training and West Lancashire Wellbeing Community Restart, along with various speakers.

George, from the group Del Mundo, performed a song he wrote about his own journey with mental health.

And he also gave a rendition of *My Home Town*, which was written to portray the 'positive' side of Skelmersdale in response to the controversial TV programme in which artist Grayson Perry painted an unflattering picture of the town.

Time to Talk Day was a national initiative organised by the social movement group Time to Change, urging people to open up about mental health.



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Public Information

Quiz night date for civic duo

THE Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of West Lancs, Councillor Noel Delaney and Mrs Ann Stubert, will attend a quiz night run by students at the West Lancashire College Works Restaurant, Skelmersdale on Thursday, February 8 at 5pm.

Got a story? Ring the News Desk on 01704 392400

Public consultation on proposed changes to sheltered housing policy

Report by **Kenny Parker**

A DRAFT housing policy proposing to reduce the minimum age for sheltered housing tenants in the borough has been approved for consultation by West Lancs Council's cabinet.

According to a report prepared by the Director of Housing and Inclusion, Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey, sheltered housing in West Lancashire is classed as 'hard to let'.

The proposed new policy would seek to increase occupancy by reducing the lower age limit from 60 to 55 for communal sheltered housing schemes and bungalows, and to 50 and over for sheltered flats not in communal schemes.

In addition, an associated draft pet policy, outlines a more relaxed approach to pet ownership in the council's sheltered schemes, which is hoped will generate more demand and reduce the number of offers refused.

The new rules will allow for small dogs and cats provided that the owner complies with a number of conditions, including not allowing the pets to roam in internal or external communal areas, and that dogs are kept on a lead when outside of the tenants' home in communal areas.

Presently dogs of any kind are not permitted in sheltered housing schemes.

The draft policies are subject to a public consultation which started last week and ends on Thursday, March 22.

Other proposed changes to the housing policy include restricting the leasing of council properties to those under the age of 18 to those leaving care or those statutorily homeless and permitting families with two children to apply for three-bedroom properties, subject to an affordability assessment - a measure designed to relieve demand on the limited two-bed housing stock.

It is also proposed to update the advertising of new properties on the council's Homefinder service daily.

The draft policies are able to be viewed by searching for 'consultations underway' on the council's webiste at www.westlancs.gov.uk, where an email address is also provided for comments.

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Some of the pupils from St James' Catholic Primary School with their Sainsbury's Gold School Games Award

Primary school strikes gold in games award scheme

A SKELMERSDALE school has been recognised for its commitment to sports and fitness.

St James Catholic Primary in Ashurst Road has been presented with the Sainsbury's Gold School Games Award.

Recognising the school's commitment towards school sport and fitness right across all age ranges, the award was presented by ward councillor and deputy leader of West Lancs Council, Councillor Yvonne Gagen.

The Sainsbury's School Games Mark is a Government-led awards scheme, launched in 2012 to "reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community."

St James' headteacher, Dave Iliff, commented: "The children love the many and varied opportunities offered here at St James' to take part in a number of different school clubs and competitions.

"This award just shows how many different sports the children are involved in, such as netball, football, swimming, athletics, basketball, dodgeball, tag rugby and cross country to name a few. Some of these sports are also offered to some of our younger children too.

"I would also like to thank the dedicated staff who give up so much of their spare time and the wonderful support from our parents."

Artz Centre's creative youngsters celebrated at glittering occasion

THE Artz Centre in Birch Green has celebrated its 6th Annual Awards Night with a star-studded event held at the DW Stadium in Wigan.

The evening saw some of the town's most creative young people being recognised for their talents and achievements of 2017, across a variety of Oscars-style award categories and concluding with the coveted Artz Student of the Year accolades.

This year they were won by Joe Howard and Abi Meadows for the senior and junior categories respectively.

Officials of the organisation declared the night a roaring success, with more than 120 Artz Academy students in attendance, accompanied by their extremely proud parents, guardians and families.

The event was also graced by two guest speakers, former Royal Marine Brigadier and Deputy Task Force Manager for the Ministry of Defence, Ian Huntley; and the Mayor of West Lancashire, Councillor Neil Furey.

In an emotive speech, Ian Huntley spoke highly of the positive attitudes of the young people attending the centre, commenting on the youngsters' commitment to their Artz values - to aim high, work hard, take pride, respect and be themselves.

He thanked the Artz Centre for his invitation and added: "I left reminded that the world is full of good people who, with a bit of guidance and leadership, can be truly remarkable."

Some of the prize winners at the Artz Centre's sixth annual awards night

Cllr. Furey also extended his thanks to the Artz Centre, congratulating the team and young people on the success of the evening and commenting: "I had a great time celebrating your fantastic work, 2018 looks like another busy year!"

The Awards Night also offered an exciting insight into what is to come for the Artz Centre this year.

The arts-based community interest company already have 16 productions set for 2018, alongside the launch of an exciting new 'Artz Education' project which will offer students the opportunity to work towards RFL (Rock School Limited) and LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts) official graded examinations in musical theatre and the performing arts.

The Artz Centre has also recently established a new partnership with West Lancashire College, to deliver a brand new Artz for Adults group, set to start in March.

Artz Centre director, Mark Ashton said: "The evening was a great example of what can be achieved if we continue to aim high. I would like to pay tribute to the amazing team of professionals and volunteers who continue to make these opportunities possible.

"We have an exciting year ahead which everyone is very much looking forward to. As 'the arts' continues to suffer in many other areas due to a lack of funding and innovation, the Skelmersdale arts scene continues to flourish and for that we are very proud."

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Council's Wi-Fi scheme nominated for national award

A COUNCIL scheme to make the Internet more accessible to older people is in the running for a national award.

West Lancs Council has been nominated in the Outstanding Approach to Promoting Digital Inclusion category for the UK Housing Awards 2018 after installing Wi-Fi in all its communal sheltered accommodation schemes.

The winner is expected to be announced in May.

Council staff have also been carrying out taster sessions with the residents so they could learn more about the Internet, using a tablet device and the services they can access online.

Some of the older people had never used or even held a device, but the sessions were very popular and one resident enjoyed it so much he said he would go out and buy his own tablet.

Each scheme has also been scheduled a taster session and offered courses through Lancashire Adult Learning in the comfort of their own communal lounge.

The Wi-Fi and taster sessions are part of the council's Digital Inclusion Strategy which aims to increase the proportion of residents in the borough who have basic online skills and access to the Internet.

Residents at The Dell, Up Holland, learn how to use the Internet through a council-run scheme.

Statistics from Age UK show that 47 per cent of people aged between 65 and 87 have never been online. Surveys were carried out in the sheltered accommodation and residents were very keen to have the Wi-Fi connection.

Councillor Jenny Forshaw, the council's portfolio holder for housing and landlord services, said: "The council is delighted to have been nominated for this national award as it highlights the importance of the work we have been doing.

"More and more services provided by private and public sector bodies are moving totally online, or can be cheaper if they are accessed online.

"Some older people may be more capable of using online services than younger generations, but there are many who will be vulnerable to these changes and it is vital they are not left behind.

"The taster sessions were a great success as they were aimed at showing how people can access services through the Internet that are relevant to them, as well as fun things like shopping. Those who attended really enjoyed themselves."

Residents of the schemes are also able to access further learning through online resources provided by The Good Things Foundation available on the website www.learnmyway.com using the council's membership.

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Year 5 and 6 pupils who took part in the SHARES Lancashire Public Speaking competition pictured with organisers and judges

Pupils' inspiring talk prompts renewed bid to raise funds for transfer of Glenburn 3G pitch

Report by **Henry James**

REACTION to a presentation by two pupils at Delph Side Community Primary School has prompted the headteacher to launch one last attempt to try and raise the £300,000 needed to transfer the Glenburn 3G pitch to the school in Eskdale.

The Champion reported recently that the school had decided to drop their campaign to transfer the pitch citing a lack of financial support.

However when headteacher Liz Ormerod saw the presentation by Ruby Don and Buddy McHugh during a public speaking event at West Lancashire College, she was inspired to give the fundraising bid one last throw of the dice.

Ruby and Buddy won the event, organised by SHARES, and their winning entry was placed on the school's social media page where it has received more than 22,000 views, 175 likes and 241 shares.

During the talk, delivered in the form of a poem, they say that the pitch could help tackle childhood obesity and add that they wish they knew a millionaire who could help them. They add that the school has been let down by people who said they would help.

Liz said: "Ruby and Buddy did really well and they spoke very passionately on the sports pitch subject and about a town which is often forgotten. They really went for the jugular and they were funny. Since the presentation I have been contacted by many people who have said good things about the presentation.

"So we are going to ride a wave after their speech and try again to raise the £300,000."

Lancashire County Council has offered to give the pitch to the school for free if they can cover the cost of relocation.

Councillor Adrian Owen of the independent political group, Our West Lancashire, had called for the pitch to be handed over to a local community group in its current location.

However, Skelmersdale Labour Councillor Terry Aldridge said: "I've been working with staff and governors at Delph Side, SHARES and our MP Rosie Cooper to get the commitment from Lancashire County Council to gift the pitches to the local schools.

Ruby and Don are pictured with their trophies and West Lancs Deputy Mayor, Councillor Noel Delaney and Steve Kent, WLBC leisure operations manager

"We secured this, brought council officers down to the site, had meetings and carried out fundraising events and functions to try to get the money needed for the transfer of the pitch.

"At no point did the former Conservative deputy leader of the council Adrian Owens show any interest in helping or supporting. This is the same man who was in charge of the finance when they decided to shut down the Skelmersdale Sports Centre at Digmoor in 2012 despite opposition from councillors and residents.

"It is a disgrace and a huge disrespect to all who have been working hard to provide facilities here in Skelmersdale for our young people for him to be trying to grab newspaper headlines over a very serious issue."

Anyone who would like to help the campaign is asked to phone 01695 721881.

'Don't make it easy for thieves' plea

KEEP your doors locked and don't make it easy for thieves!

That's the message from police at Skelmersdale after officers received reports of burglaries where offenders have been able to gain entry to properties through unlocked doors.

Posting on social media, Sergeant Hesketh from Skelmersdale Police wrote: "Don't make it easy for them!

"How often do you check your doors and windows are locked? When you come home? When you leave the house? When you go to bed? All, or none of these?

"I've just finishing reading our monthly burglary report for the division and one thing that jumps out is the number of offences reported where burglars have been able to try their luck, turn a door handle and walk right into people's home!

"We've seen recent CCTV footage where suspects will try numerous doors and simply move on if they're locked.

(This isn't news to us, but it's worth highlighting to give you an insight).

"Whether you're nipping out, or 'just in the next room' – you should keep your doors locked, and keep you and your belongings safe."

Lancashire Police advise people to close and lock their doors and windows when they go out, even if they are just in the garden.

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Hospital staff win praise for improved cancer treatment waiting times

Health secretary says trust is a 'real example to others' of how to ensure patients get the care they deserve

Report by **Henry James**

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt addressing staff at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust during his visit last August

HEALTH Secretary Jeremy Hunt has praised staff at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust for improvements to its cancer treatment waiting times.

Between June and November 2017 the proportion of cancer patients starting their cancer treatment within 62 days rose from 76.1% to 88%. The national target is 85%.

In a letter to the trust's chair and chief executive, Mr Hunt wrote: "The trust is a real example to others, demonstrating how to improve performance in a short space of time and ensure that your patients get the care that they deserve.

"From visiting organisations throughout the country, I know that the immense amount of work that will have been behind this outcome cannot be underestimated. Improvements like this are impressive and testament to the hard work and dedication of the trust's staff.

"Please do pass on my congratulations to all those who work at the trust. The service they give makes a real difference to the lives of many of the area's sickest and most vulnerable patients."

Elaine Deeming, lead cancer nurse with the trust, said: "This result has been achieved by the hard work and diligence of everyone working in Cancer Services - so, special thanks to tracker teams, service and department managers, clinical leads and clinical nurse specialists."

And Ann Farrar, the trust's interim chief executive, added: "This is a terrific performance by a dedicated team doing their very best for some of our most vulnerable patients."

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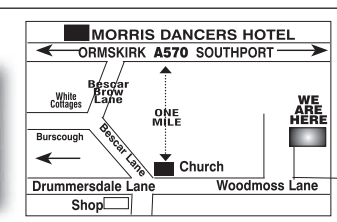

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Anti-fracking alliance calls public meeting

Report by **Kenny Parker**

AN alliance of groups opposed to fracking plans in West Lancashire has organised a public awareness meeting ahead of a public information day arranged by Aurora Energy Resources.

The company has submitted a scoping request to Lancashire County Council with a view to submitting a planning application to mine for shale gas at Altcar Moss.

A scoping request is the first step in agreeing the extent and nature of environmental assessments required to inform the subsequent planning application.

Moss Alliance, a recently formed alliance of groups opposed to the plans, will be holding a meeting at Haskayne Village Hall, School Lane, Downholland on Saturday February 10 starting at 10.30am.

Organisers say it will "empower" residents with the knowledge they need to ask the energy company the right questions.

The community engagement meeting organised by Aurora will also be held at Haskayne Village Hall on Saturday, February 17 from noon to 6pm.

Chairwoman of Halsall Against Fracking, Maureen Mills, said: "I would encourage residents of Formby, Great Altcar, Haskayne, Downholland, Barton, Halsall and the surrounding areas to attend the public meeting on February 10 to raise their concerns.

"Aurora's public information afternoon is a formality and residents of all areas that would potentially feel the effects of this proposed industrialisation of the landscape and all that comes with it need to be prepared for the industry rhetoric they will encounter on the day."

West Lancs MP, Rosie Cooper, has pledged her backing for the alliance.

Supported

She said: "I have consistently opposed fracking for many years now, voting in Parliament for a complete moratorium on the practice until we know the true detail around the potential health and safety implications.

"I supported Lancashire County Council's rejection of planning permission for fracking by Cuadrilla.

"Now, the fight is being brought to our own doorstep with Aurora seeking permission to frack in the West Lancashire constituency, at Altcar.

"I am working with residents and local anti-fracking groups supporting the opposition to these plans.

"I have also met with the Environment Agency to look at Aurora's proposals and am investigating on what grounds the fracking plans can be stopped."

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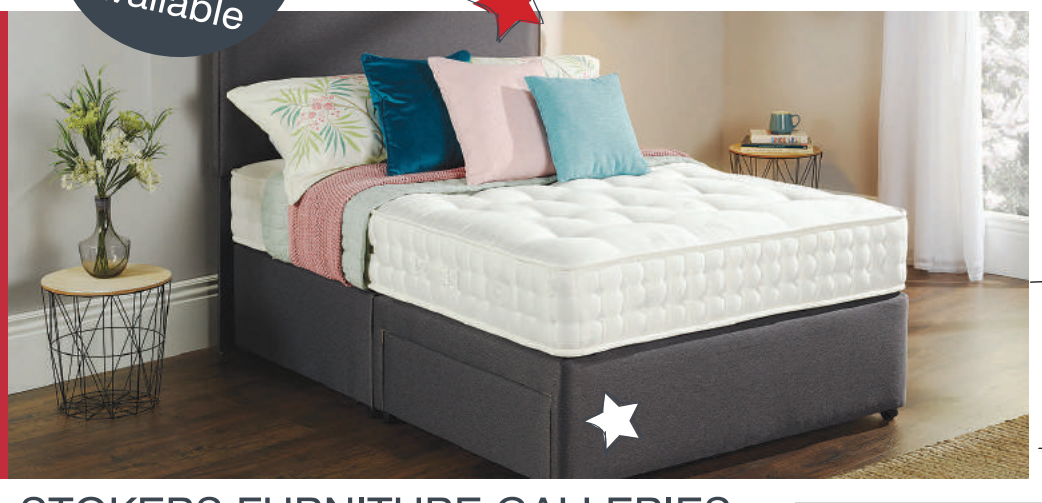

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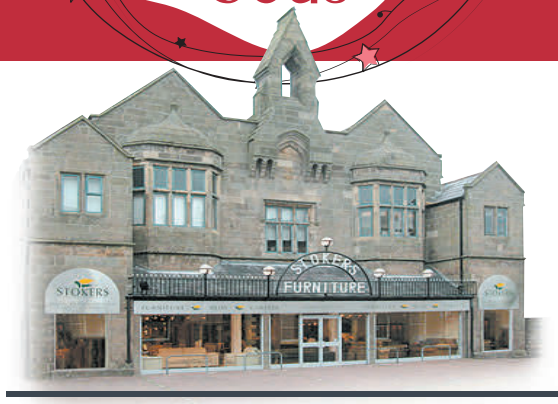

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Care home 'will be good for community'

A SPOKESPERSON for the healthcare group which is set to build a new care home on the site of the former Red Lion pub in Burscough has sought to assure residents that the development will be good for the community.

Athena Healthcare Group, which has homes in Ormskirk, Burscough, Southport and Formby, won planning permission to build a two-storey, 80-bed home at the site on Liverpool Road South.

Lesley Malone, group events ambassador, said that the building of the home, which also involves the demolition of adjoining light industrial buildings and a detached house, is expected to be completed by autumn of next year.

An artist's impression of the care home to be built on the site of the former Red Lion pub.

Once up and running, she said, it will create about 80 jobs. It would also become part of the Athena Community Activities Hub, an initiative for which she was named the Care Innovator North West at last year's Great British Care Awards.

The hub was set up to improve the social lives of elderly people living in care homes and in the surrounding communities by helping them to meet together for meals and trips out.

Lesley said: "This home is good for the town as it is creating jobs in the local area.

"It will also join with the Athena Community Hub and become a place where ladies and gentlemen can enjoy coffee mornings and make friendships with other older people."

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CERTASS

Lancashire County Council is proposing to change the way it repairs potholes on the county's roads

County Council proposing to change way it fixes potholes

Authority says new policy will give priority to busiest roads - but Labour claims it's trying to 'mislead public with statistics'

Report by **Henry James**

LANCASHIRE County Council is proposing to change the way it repairs potholes with the aim of ensuring the most serious and those on the busiest roads are fixed the quickest.

The council's cabinet has agreed a revised pothole repair policy which, it's claimed, will give priority to roads which are most used.

Work will also be recorded in a new format to show how well or otherwise the revised policy is working.

However Labour's deputy leader, Skelmersdale County Councillor John Fillis accused the council of attempting to mislead the public with statistics.

And opposition councillors will be 'calling in' the policy for further scrutiny, which will prevent its implementation until full clarification has been reached regarding how long it will take to fill a pothole.

The proposed new policy introduces a new target to fix potholes or other defects which are 15cm or greater in depth, and 30cm wide, within one working day - with five-day, 10-day and 20-day targets for less serious problems.

The council currently monitors its performance according to a target to repair potholes 4cm or more in depth within 20 working days.

County Councillor Keith Iddon, cabinet member for highways and transport, said: "We have inspectors working year-round to check our roads are safe. Safety is always our top priority and we already aim to respond quickly to serious defects and emergency situations.

"However the way we currently monitor performance does not reflect this risk-based approach, as the target we set ourselves is to repair all potholes within 20 working days. Whilst this is a good thing to achieve, it is also important that we prioritise the most serious defects and busiest roads and the revised policy makes this much clearer."

Some of the funding which councils receive from the Department for Transport is based on how well they are performing, with only those in the top band eligible to receive 100% of their allocated funding for road maintenance. Lancashire is currently rated in the topmost of three tiers.

County Councillor Iddon added: "This more rigorous regime means we'll be able to better monitor our performance, hold ourselves to account, and ensure we're directing resources where they're most needed.

"The wet and freezing weather we've been experiencing lately means we have a lot of potholes to repair at the moment, and these conditions can lead to a small crack becoming a potentially dangerous pothole very quickly.

"We're repairing them as soon as we can, and people will start to notice the difference as the weather improves and fewer potholes are appearing. This revised policy will help to ensure that we're focused on repairing the worst damage quickly to ensure our roads are safe. Our budget proposal to council next week includes an extra £5m to repair potholes."

However, Labour said that the report was neither clear nor accurate as to the parameters of measurement between inspection and the public reporting a pothole.

Cllr. Fillis said: "Lancashire County Council have increased the time it will take to fix a pothole, while attempting to mislead the public with statistics that do not identify how long it really takes to fix a pothole from a member of the public reporting, to the work being done.

"The previous Labour administration agreed to repair 90% of all carriageway and footway potholes reported within 20 working days. The Conservative administration have now changed the measurement to the starting time from the day it's identified by the inspector.

"This does not seem much on paper but the time it takes to have a reported pothole inspected has not been specified. Waiting for the pothole to be inspected could be a week or even two weeks and even longer during the winter time."

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Champion LETTERS to the Editor

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Get your facts right before having a go at our long-suffering police officers doing a nasty, thankless job

IN reply to your 'disillusioned pensioner' (July 31), firstly I suggest they get their facts correct. Police officers now cannot retire before 60!

Policing is a dirty, nasty, violent, thankless profession, carried out by young men and women who only wish is to make society fairer and to protect those who need protecting.

They pay almost 15% of their gross wage into their pension, more than any other civil servants and more than any other police in the world.

Police officers suffer disproportionate mental health issues and PTSD issues. They work long, unsociable hours, their relationships suffer disproportionately, they are regularly assaulted, spat on, abused and constantly criticised by the chattering classes, politicians, the media, armchair lawyers and so-called experts who've never done a day's policing in their lives.

If this selfish, self-centred argument is taken to its logical conclusion, then why should I pay for their triple-locked state pension? Why should I pay for their forthcoming social care? Why should I pay for their generation's disproportionate use of the NHS? Why should I pay for their free TV licence and bus pass?

Do you see how meany-mouthed and selfish this argument becomes?

This baby boomer has reaped the most prosperous economic boom in history and has the gall to state that they think it's unfair that a tiny proportion of their council tax will contribute to local policing?

The real issue that this entitled person should be bleating about is the scandal of 10 years of Conservative under-funding of all public services, forcing the police commissioner to go cap in hand for relative peanuts in order to be able to supply a skeleton service.

Shame on the letter-writer and shame on the Government. I only hope that one day there might be an officer to come to this person's help when they dial 999. Don't count on it though!

Angry, by email

Setting the record straight on police force pensions and retirement age

IN response to our dear 'Disillusioned Pensioner' (Letters, July 31) who has written in seemingly appalled at the fact that police officers should retire at the age of 50 on a 'handsome (unfunded) pension', I thought I would try and make them feel better by giving them some facts.

Police officers can NOT retire at 50 on a full pension ever since Tom Windsor had his say on what modern policing should look like - a man with absolutely no experience in policing whatsoever up until that point. (Probably much the same as our delusional 'Disillusioned Pensioner.')

Just like most public sector workers, police officers' pensions have been ripped up, stamped on and thrown back in their faces.

Instead of a service-based pension (previously 30-35 years), police pensions are now based solely on a retirement age of 60, no matter how much service they have, and the pay almost 14% of their wages into their 'unfunded' pension pot!

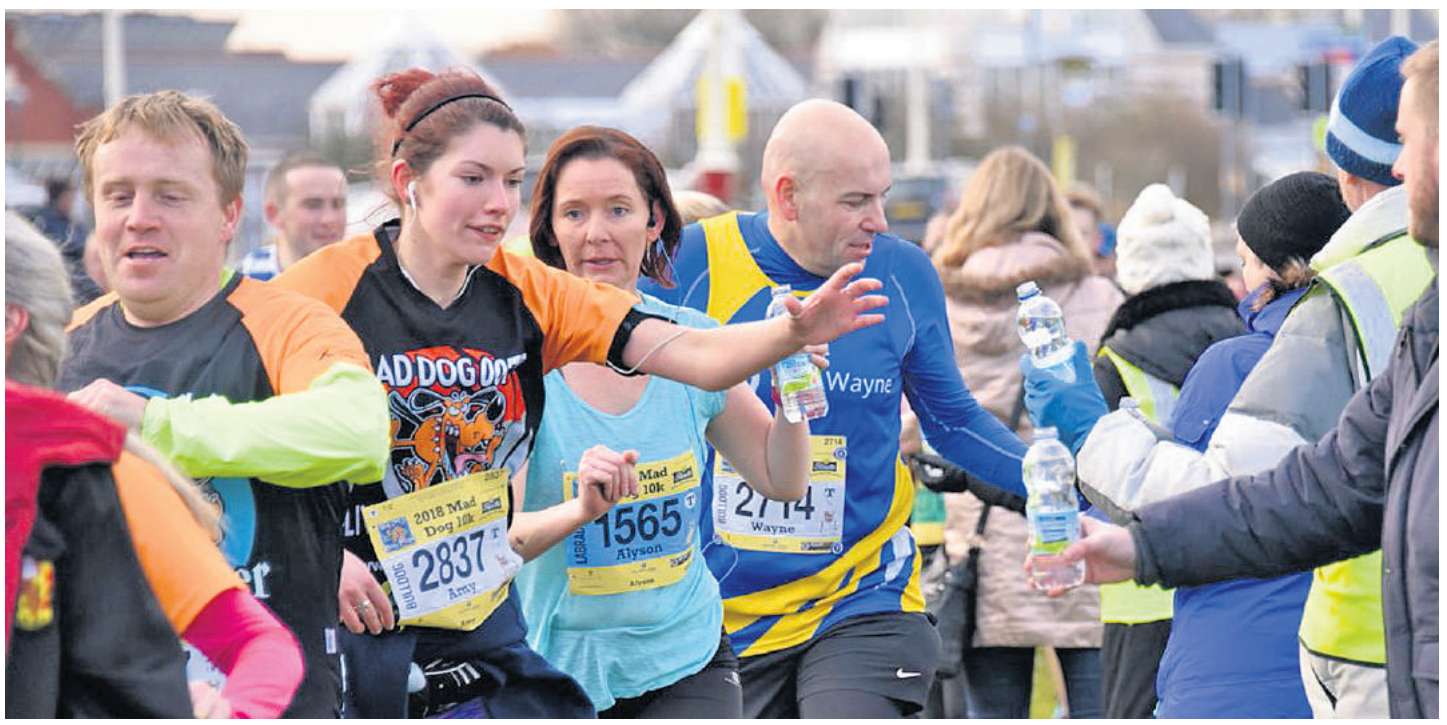
So, this now means that 59-year-old men and women across the UK are expected to go out 24/7, 365 days a year and get involved with violent offenders, high on all sorts, hell-bent on either doing harm to these men and women and the public. Feel free to join the queue if you think this is a job for you!

As for a desk job beyond 50, if you want to save money, then where is the sense in paying almost £40,000 a year for a job that could be done by support staff for a lot less? And how many desk jobs do you think there are in the police?

Hope this clears up the ambiguity and happy retirement.

G. O., Ormskirk, details supplied

PICTURE of the week



A small army of volunteers handed out bottles of water to the more than 2,500 runners who took part in the Mad Dog 10k race in Southport last Sunday. Picture by Martyn Snape.

Drop us a line

IF you've got a view on a topic of local or national interest which you would like to share with the readers of the Champion, why not drop us a line?

Letters to the editor should be concise, preferably no more than 350 words, and should include the sender's name, address and contact details, although not necessarily for publication.

The editor reserves the right to edit all items submitted for favour of publication.

Correspondents preferring not to have their name and/or their address published may provide a suitable nom de plume.

Letters can be posted or emailed to the respective addresses listed at the top of this page.

■ PLEASE note: All views and opinions expressed in letters to the editor are solely those of the authors.

Public have a duty to help stamp out fly-tipping and preserve our countryside

RE: Fly-tipping at Beacon Park and Mill Lane.

Arriving at the top car park recently I noted a large dump of household detritus at the inner end, consisting of carpet, utensils, chairs, fold-up bed etc.

Obviously the contents of a house clear-out and a van would have been used as it was too much for a 4 x 4.

This is the second time this year this has happened.

Also, on Mill Lane, wardrobes and a bed had been dumped on the road edge verge.

This tipping must have been done by a rogue contractor and is obscene and we, the public, must be alert to it.

We must become observant, any vans parked should be noted and numbers recorded. If we see a van parked which arouses our suspicion we have a duty to be good caring citizens and take note.

If there is any subsequent rubbish the council must be informed.

The council cannot be everywhere all the time.

We live in this glorious countryside and must do our duty in helping to protect it. The alternative is rubbish anarchy.

I feel sure the council must have a system when using contractors to clear out household rubbish from vacant properties that requires the address of the dumped rubbish.

I suggest that fines for dumping must be at least £500 and warning signs erected.

On this last occasion the rubbish was removed a day after.

This was no doubt due to the quick action of the council prompted by one of the splendid team of Park Rangers - Dan, Richard, Ben, Hannah and volunteers who work so hard to husband the park and keep it pristine to be enjoyed by the public who also have a duty to protect.

Graham P. Walker,
Up Holland.

Commissioner right to call for investment

MAY I comment on the remarks made by the 'disillusioned pensioner' who has written about police officers' pensions.

I have a few acquaintances who are police personnel and understand that officers contribute at least 13% of their salary towards their pensions. It is not therefore 'unfunded.' Also, they do not now retire at 50. I think it is more like 60.

Surely no one wants to see a 60-year-old officer patrolling, perhaps unable to run and give chase to offenders? 'Desk jobs' are now the province of civilian staff who do an admirable job.

It has been said that we always get the police force we deserve. Mr Grimshaw is right, more investment is required. If it is under-funded and under-staffed it becomes second-rate with the criminal fraternity becoming more confident and violent and I would suggest we do not need that.

Flo Richards, by email

Using the old Cottage Hospital could free up beds in main wards

COULD the old cottage hospital on Hants Lane Ormskirk, now unoccupied, be put back into use as a half-way house for people currently blocking beds in main hospital wards across West Lancs?

These patients are waiting for partner services to offer the necessary help for them to return home. They don't need the same medical requirements as a hospital provides and there is a health centre just across the road.

Maybe it could be run by some charity organisation. After all, this is what this building was designed to be used as.

I wonder how-many desperately needed beds would be freed up?

Peter Reeves, by email

No need for scorn and sarcasm in letters

MY letter appeared in the Champion a few weeks ago as I was saddened by the upsurge of intolerance and nastiness due to the EU Referendum.

This, unfortunately, has been highlighted again by the scornful and sarcastic letter by 'Educated Brexiteer' (January 24).

By all means state your allegiance, but please write in a non-offensive manner to put over your point of view. The writer's letter was demeaning, shameful and crass.

A synonym of educated is cultured, but 'Educated Brexiteer' comes across unfortunately as self-righteous, overbearing and arrogant.

James McGregor, Parbold

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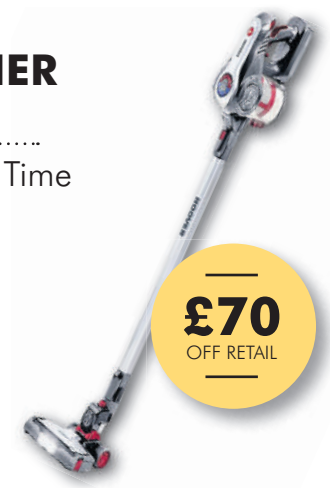

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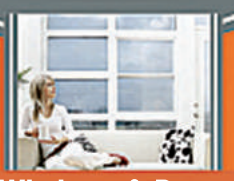

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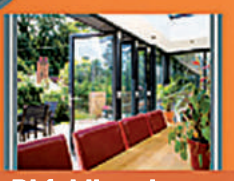

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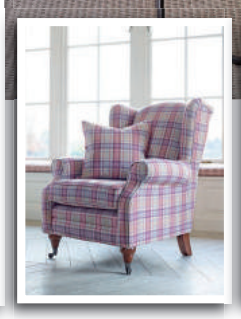

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Edge Hill academic's research findings could have impact on developing countries

RESEARCH conducted by an academic at Edge Hill University has led to a discovery which could impact on the future of some developing countries.

Sven Batke, lecturer in biology at the Ormskirk campus, has jointly authored a paper titled *Increasing stomatal conductance in response to rising atmospheric CO2*, which has been published in the *Annals of Botany*, an international plant science journal.

The paper reassesses how plants interact with the climate. Until now it was assumed and has been demonstrated that ecosystems across the world would reduce their water loss under future predicted increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide. However, this new study challenges that assumption using several lines of evidence.

Stomata, tiny openings on the surface of leaves, take in carbon dioxide and release water vapour into the air during the process of photosynthesis. An increase in carbon dioxide as a result of burning of fossil fuels in the atmosphere, is causing plants to keep their stomata shut for longer, resulting in the plants requiring less water.

However the decrease in water loss through the process of transpiration is causing the soil to become more saturated with water, therefore contributing towards flooding by increasing the risk of run-off.

But not all plants are reacting in the same way.

Dry, arid countries, such as some African nations, are already environmentally challenged as they are prone to drought. Instead of conserving water, insights from this new study show that plants in these countries might be doing the opposite to what is expected. The increase in loss of water from the soil, has the potential to increase the risk of drought in these regions.

Sven said: "The results from our study clearly highlighted that the response of plants to elevated carbon dioxide is by no means uniform across all global biomes.

"It was particularly interesting to see was that in some dry and hot regions in the world, plants actually lose water instead of conserving it.

"This could have potentially large negative consequences for local communities who particularly rely on the availability of water for their food production."

Sven Batke

Charity's helping hand for digital tech novices

LOCAL charity Timesavers are providing sessions to help people get to grips with digital technology.

Every Thursday afternoon in February between 2 and 4pm, visitors will be able to take their laptop, tablet or phone to Four Lane Ends Mission in Skelmersdale Road, Bickerstaffe where helpers will be on hand to teach them how to use the Internet, including how to access online shopping and social media sites such as Facebook.

Sessions are free, but donations to the charity are welcome.

Timesavers is a small, parent-run charity providing training and work experience in office and computer skills for people with moderate learning difficulties. It is seeking employers willing to offer office work experience for the people it supports to give them an insight into the world of work. For more information ring 07971 299606 or email westlancsedward@btinternet.com.

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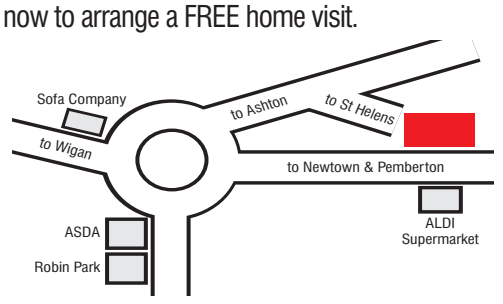

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New drive to find adopters for ‘older’ children and siblings

LANCASHIRE County Council is launching a new campaign aimed at finding people willing to adopt ‘older’ children and siblings.

County Councillor Susie Charles, cabinet member for children, young people and schools, said: “We want to remind anyone wanting to start or grow their family through adoption that there are children of all ages ready for a loving home.

“When people first start to think about adoption, they usually consider a baby, or even a toddler, rather than an older child.

“The unfortunate reality is that children are considered to be older for adoption at just four years of age. It is likely that these children will have a brother or sister, and we try to keep brothers and sisters together whenever we can. We’re trying to find homes for these children in particular.”

The county council is keen to hear from a broad range of prospective adopters, including single people and couples, same-sex and heterosexual, from all religious backgrounds or none.

Consideration is given to anyone who wishes to adopt, regardless of their age, marital status, sexuality or gender. There are no strict rules about whether people should have jobs, their own homes or have their own children.

The only legal requirement is that adopters must be over 21 and live within Lancashire or nearby.

A range of adoption support services and advice is available to anyone who has adopted a child.

Anyone interested in finding out more about adoption can contact the county council by calling the adoption team on 0300 123 6723 or by visiting the website at www.lancashire.gov.uk/adoption.

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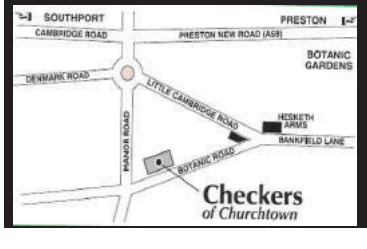

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Piper Bob Wilson entertains care home residents and staff celebrating Burns Day at the Royal Clifton Hotel on a treat organised by the Athena Healthcare Group's Community Hub.

Community hub members enjoy Burns Day treat

PENSIONERS from a North West care hub enjoyed a day out to mark Burns Day.

The Athena Health Care Group, which owns a number of homes across Sefton and West Lancs, launched its Community Activities Hub last year to unite older people's services and groups and promote sharing inspirational ideas with activity co-ordinators from care providers across the North West.

They also hold joint activity sessions at the hub's care homes, as well as 'meaningful' days out as part of their Ageing Well in the Community initiative.

The hub recently marked Burns Day with staff and residents enjoying a three-course meal with bagpipe music provided by piper Bob Wilson at the Royal Clifton Hotel in Southport.

Burns Day is a celebration of the life and poetry of the Scottish poet Robert Burns, held on or close to the anniversary of his birthday on January 25.

Staff and residents from Athena's homes Abbey Wood Lodge in Ormskirk, Parklands Lodge in Southport and Woodlands Lodge in Formby, attended along with staff and residents from fellow hub members Arranmore Park Rest Home in Burscough and Dale Park Care Home in Southport.

Any other care homes wishing to join the hub can contact Lesley on 01704 535353 or 07538 243 348.

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Big screen or no, TV's ignored by my dogs - until they hear a bark!

I WAS casually watching telly the other evening when the head, shoulders and part of the back of a rather handsome greyhound, rapidly followed by the rest of the dog, appeared walking across the screen.

Now, I have a perfectly bog standard, normal size TV and this lovely animal appeared just about life-size from where I was sitting. And it occurred to me that had I one of those huge, big-screen jobs then it would have been rather like watching a monster from one of those creaking horror films from the 1940s and 50s.

Don't get me wrong, I do feel rather jealous every time I see one of those big, wall-mounted sets, but the fact is not just that I can't afford one but that I can't afford the house with a room large enough to enjoy it in.

A few years ago I remember walking in the evening past a small cottage. It was dark and the curtains were still open and it was hard not to let my eyes be drawn by the obvious flickering of pictures from an enormous TV.

The room itself was small - many folk have far larger bathrooms - so where on earth its owner sat to enjoy what was probably his or her pride and joy I don't know. Possibly they sat in the hallway with the door open.

Anyway, where was I? Oh yes, having thought about the life-size dog, I went on to give thought to its real-life brothers and sisters, and their relation to television generally.

Now, I am practically certain that none of the rough collies that my late brother George and I have had the pleasure of sharing a life with could ever actually see a picture on the TV screen. I put that down to 625 lines being insufficient for it to register.

More peculiar though is the question of sounds emanating from the goggle box. Now neither Tina nor Cinders take the slightest notice of shouts, screams, explosions or music of any kind. But just let a dog bark, even in the background of a programme, and they both bark back.

What puzzles me about this is that it seems apparent that they recognise that most of the sounds from the TV (or radio for that matter) are somehow artificial and therefore to be ignored, but why then react to canine barks? Strange.

Another oddity (at least with our collies) is that their eyesight during daylight is not as good as that of a human. Try standing on the far side of a field - they cannot see you unless you wave or move violently. But at night they see far better, being able to navigate country or even woodland, at speed, safely without the aid of a torch.

As an aside, I remember the first time I took my previous Tina onto a Mersey ferry. I took her to one of the hawser holes so she could look out when we left the Pier Head.

The boat sailed, Tina had a look at the passing scene - and if dogs have body language, Tina was saying quite clearly: "So what? It's water."

Realised

She turned inboard within seconds and all she wanted to do was to walk around the decks looking at people.

I do seem to have covered quite a bit of ground from the living room to the River Mersey, but dogs have remained the subject for at least most of my odyssey. Even my visit to a country cottage was during Tina's evening walk.

Just one - brief - thing more about TV. At present the wonderful series, *The Onedin Line,* is being repeated on the Drama Channel on Saturday afternoons. They really don't make 'em like that any more, more's the pity. But with three episodes on the trot to record, I can spin them out during the following week to always have something to look forward to.

Though I did miss part of one episode because a dog was barking in the programme's somewhat unlikely looking portrayal of Liverpool in the dying days of sail. And Tina joined in with relish!

I've long realised that different barks mean different things (some to be ignored, other demanding an answer or retaliation). Whatever this particular one meant, Tina was certain that an emphatic reply was the order of the day!

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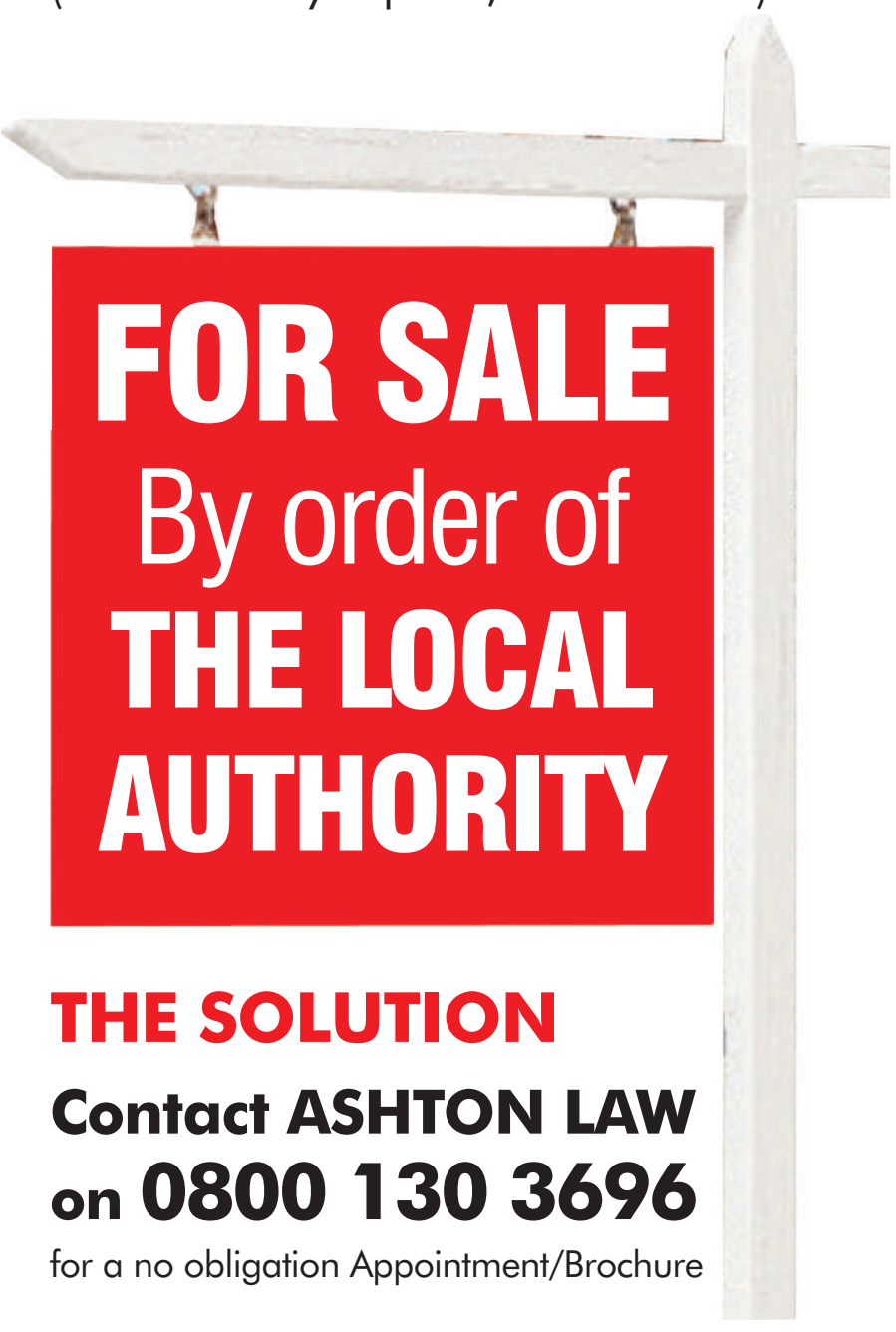

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County's superfast broadband is 'good for business' says council

THE county council says Lancashire is beating the national figure for superfast broadband coverage and that's good for business according to the cabinet member responsible for economic development.

County Councillor Michael Green.

Figures released by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport reveal that it has reached its national target of making superfast broadband available to 95% of the country.

But the county council says the figure for Lancashire is 97% coverage.

And County Councillor Michael Green, cabinet member for economic development, environment and planning, said: "The Superfast Lancashire project is a great example of the county council working in partnership with the private sector.

"This has delivered increased broadband speeds, which helps residents by opening up new services, but perhaps more importantly it has opened up new opportunities for business.

"Online services provide a global audience for Lancashire business, so it's vital to have the right infrastructure in place to support the needs of the private sector, which creates new jobs and helps to grow the Lancashire economy."

The authority says the county has already surpassed the national average and reached more than 97% coverage, with around 746,000 households and businesses having access to superfast speeds of 24Mbps and above - and the numbers continue to grow.

This has been delivered through a combination of commercial coverage from Openreach, Virgin and smaller companies like B4RN and the publicly-funded Superfast Lancashire programme.

Superfast Lancashire focuses on the non-commercial areas. By the end of this year, it will have delivered Superfast broadband access to more than 150,000 households and businesses and invested £30m of public money.

Schools invited to enter competition to mark Commonwealth Summit

SECONDARY school pupils in West Lancashire are being invited to take part in a competition to mark this year's Commonwealth Summit.

The summit takes place every two years when representatives of the 52 member nations gather to discuss key issues. This year's event, in London, is likely to be the last attended by the Queen.

Supported by Lancashire County Council, the Commonwealth Voices spoken word competition is open to all pupils in the county aged between 11 and 16.

Aimed to encourage creative self-expression, entries can address one of the following four key areas due to be discussed during the April summit: a fairer future; a more secure future; a more sustainable future; and a more prosperous future.

Schools must submit video entries of spoken word pieces on behalf of their pupils, who can enter as individuals or in groups of up to five members.

Six finalists will then perform in front of a live audience at the Lancashire Civic Leaders' Commonwealth Celebration Event on Wednesday, April 18.

Closing date for entries is Friday, March 16 and the finalists will be announced on Thursday, March 22.

The winners will receive a 10-inch Android tablet and prize money for their school, while two runners-up will receive 8-inch tablets and cash.

Giant Lego animals set for return to Martin Mere

FOURTEEN giant Lego brick animals will be returning to WWT Martin Mere Wetland Centre this spring.

Three new 'surprise' models will join the existing trail that includes a large North American River Otter, a Hawaiian Goose (Ne Ne), the world's rarest goose, a giant Kingfisher and a flamingo, plus a giant common frog called Fred.

Giant Lego brick sculptures will be at the attraction in Burscough for five weeks from Wednesday, May 9 to Sunday, June 24, alongside some of their living counterparts.

Visitors will be able to enjoy the trail of 14 individually-designed 4ft (1.5m) Lego brick characters, inspired by real species at the reserve.

Martin Mere general manager, Nick Brooks, said: "We are very excited to welcome back these amazing sculptures to WWT Martin Mere for the spring.

"The characters look fantastic, especially the new surprise additions.

"Our visitors were bowled over by them in August 2016 and we are expecting another great response this time when new life will also be in full swing with chicks, goslings, ducklings and cygnets all around the grounds."

Young visitors at a past Lego event at Martin Mere

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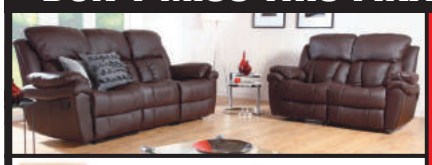

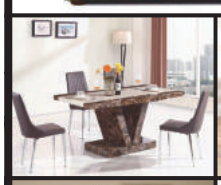

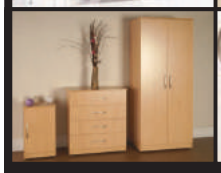

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National Trust supporters' 'come and join us' call

THE Ormskirk National Trust support group, known locally as Ormskirk and District Association of National Trust Members welcomes new recruits.

The association is open to National Trust (and affiliated trusts) members and volunteers and newcomers are always welcome to join them for informative talks and visits to places of interest.

During the winter months meetings are held at Christ Church Ministry Centre, Long Lane, Aughton, on the first Wednesday of each of month, 8pm start.

And in the summer there are regular day visits and two holidays with other social events also organised.

Forthcoming talks are as follows: Wednesday, February 7 - Archaeology at Whalley Abbey, the last 100 years by Nigel Neil. Wednesday, March 7 - Why it took 10 years to build Christ Church by Ross Moughtin. Wednesday, April 4 - Durham Then and Now by Peter Goodrich.

For further information visit the website at www.odantm.wordpress.com/.

County appoints new director to drive economic growth

LANCASHIRE County Council has appointed a new executive director of growth, environment, transport and community services.

Stephen Young will join the authority in April from Bolton Council, where he is currently their director of place.

His new role will encompass major areas of the county council's work including highways, economic development, planning, public transport, waste management, libraries and museums.

It is also aimed at maximising opportunities to bring major projects and funding to Lancashire through the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal, the Growth Deal, Transport for the North, and the Northern Powerhouse.

Mr Young's former duties at Bolton included leading the development and launch of its town centre masterplanning process. This resulted in £100m of investment being made available to pump into prime £1 billion town centre redevelopment.

Stephen Young

He previously worked for Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and Burnley Council.

Commenting on the appointment, Angie Ridgwell, interim chief executive and director of resources at Lancashire County Council, said: "Stephen brings a depth of experience and will be a real asset to the county.

"This is a key position with responsibility for some of our biggest services.

"He will be instrumental in the economic development of the county and will deliver a range of ambitious and major projects across Lancashire, as well as overseeing the operational delivery of key services."

Stephen Young said: "I am so looking forward to joining Lancashire County Council and continuing to build on the great work that is already taking place. Lancashire is an amazing place with exceptional people and I can't wait to get started."

The new role was created as a result of a management restructure at the authority.

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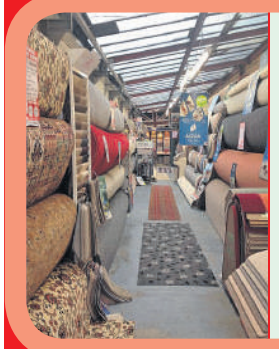

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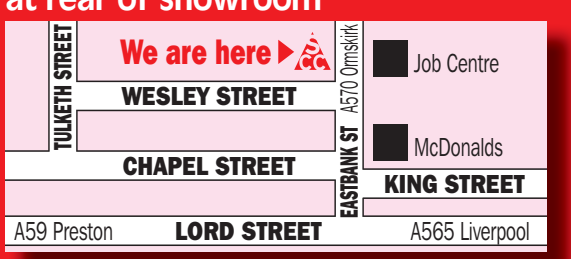

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Rosie Cooper backs call for MPs' pension fund to remove holdings from fossil fuel companies

ROSIE Cooper is among a cross-party group of more than 100 MPs and former MPs demanding that their £612 million pension fund removes its substantial holdings from fossil fuel companies to reflect their concerns about climate change.

The fund currently holds a £5.6m stake in BP and £4.9m in Shell.

Two years on from the Paris Agreement, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell became the 99th and 100th MPs to sign the Divest Parliament pledge.

MPs are responding to a rising call for divestment, with more than 800 organisations and investors worth in excess of $5 trillion having already committed to divest from fossil fuels.

West Lancs MP Ms Cooper said: "Two years on from the Paris Agreement, and with the devastating impacts of climate change already apparent, there is no room for continued investment in companies whose business is incompatible with our climate obligations.

"It is vital that MPs show leadership on positive solutions to tackle climate change which benefit society and our constituents. I am therefore proud to support the call for my pension fund to divest from fossil fuels.

Rosie Cooper

"If we could instead invest this money in renewable energies, we can really make a difference in shifting from fossil fuels and supporting more sustainable energy sources contributing even less towards industries including fracking, which could particularly affect us here in West Lancashire."

In December 2015, the UK government joined nearly 200 nations in signing the Paris Agreement on climate change. To meet the commitment to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C, with the aspirational target of 1.5°C, scientists have warned the vast majority of the world's known fossil fuel reserves must stay in the ground.

However, the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF) continues to invest millions of pounds of MPs' savings in fossil fuel companies. Both BP and Shell are among the fund's top 20 holdings - along with mining firm Rio Tinto, British American Tobacco and Amazon - which were made available for the first time in March 2017. The pension fund has to date been unwilling to make public the full list of its investments.

With the value of fossil fuel companies' stock based on their entire fossil fuel reserves - not just the small percentage that can safely be burned - campaigners say these investments are not only environmentally destructive, but represent a significant financial risk.

Both BP and Shell have been involved in lobbying against climate solutions and BP was identified at the top of a list of firms obstructing climate action in Europe.

Ladies, it's that time of year again and the Grand National is fast-approaching. We'll be celebrating Ladies' Day on Friday 13th April in our usual style with a splash of decadence.

The day we have planned has all the fun and frolics of Aintree and none of the mud, so your Louboutins will live to tell the tale.

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It's £40 per lady and every booking earns an entry into the draw to win a spa treatment.

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Martin Mere news

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Make a Splash at Martin Mere's North West Puddle Jumping Championships

February Half Term 2018

This February half term, children of all ages are being encouraged to grab their wellies, get outside and join in the fourth annual North West Puddle Jumping Championships being held at WWT Martin Mere Wetland Centre in Lancashire.

This year WWT's new children's character, Dusty Duck is joining in the fun again and helping kids create the biggest, craziest splash possible. Dusty was exclusively designed by the world-famous Aardman studios to help celebrate WWT's 70th anniversary by getting children closer to nature.

At Martin Mere, children will compete against each other to see who can produce the biggest splash from their puddle jump everyday at 2pm. They will also be judged on their enthusiasm and jumping style. Daily winners will be announced throughout the half term and some lucky 'super-splashers' will receive a fantastic prize from Dusty Duck himself! It is 50p to enter and every contestant will receive a 'splashtastic' sticker to acknowledge their puddle jumping skills.

As well as the main puddle jumping competition arenas, there will be practice zones set up to help entrants perfect their splashing techniques. In previous years these areas have been a hive of splashing activity.

Centre Manager, Nick Brooks, said: "We know that children love nothing more than to splash about in puddles, so we thought we'd give them the chance to channel their inner splasher through our nation-wide puddle jumping competition at our Wetland Centres. We've really perfected the championships this year, with brilliant competition areas, practice puddle zones, great prizes and expert judging panels. It's all a lot of fun and we know that children who love puddles often grow up to be adults that love the outdoors. So through these championships we're gently nurturing a love that may help protect wetlands and the wildlife that depend on them for years to come."

To join in the fun visit wwt.org.uk/martinmere or follow #wwtpuddlejumping

WWT Martin Mere Wetland Centre is open every day (except Christmas Day) from 9.30am to 4.30pm during winter months and parking is free of charge. Situated off the A59, it is signposted from the M61, M58 and M6. The Centre is also accessible via the Southport to Manchester and the Liverpool to Preston line by train from Burscough Rail Stations. Visit the web site http://www.wwt.org.uk/martinmere/ to find out what's on all year round at Martin Mere and the other eight WWT Wetland Centres.

Visit the web site www.wwt.org.uk/martinmere to find out what's on the reserve at the moment as well as all the upcoming events

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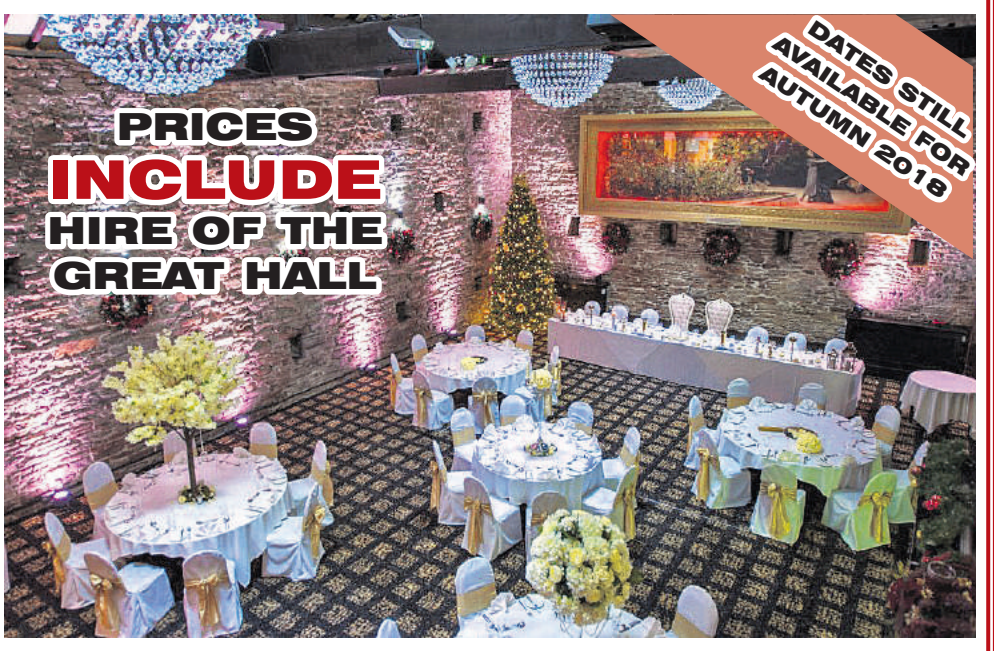

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County council accused of slashing community sector budget

Authority leader says: "We are having to take tough decisions about how we provide essential services"

Report by **Henry James**

THE Labour group on Lancashire County Council have accused the Conservative administration of cutting the budget for the community sector, by £1 million.

County Councillor Erica Lewis

They say that three grant programmes for the sector have now been closed for the 2018-19 budget with a subsquent loss of funding of £127,000 for the Local Initiative Fund, £673,000 for the Central Gateway Fund and £252,000 for Local Members Grants.

Councillor Erica Lewis, deputy shadow cabinet member for finance, said: "These cuts are a real blow to the third sector in Lancashire. At a time when many community organisations are seeing demand for their services rise these cuts will reduce capacity."

Important

Council leader, Councillor Geoff Driver responded: "In an ideal world we wouldn't need to make difficult decisions such as these, as community groups do important work for local people.

"We are not the only organisation which funds community organisations in Lancashire but the county council is facing a significant financial challenge and we are therefore having to take tough decisions about how we provide our essential services."

However, Labour pointed out that briefing papers provided with the proposals highlight that these cuts may see "increase demands on council services, and reduced programme delivery by community organisations."

But the council leader countered: "Unlike the previous Labour administration we are determined to ensure that the county council has a viable financial situation, so that we can provide certainty to those people who rely on our services. I look forward to seeing the alternatives the Labour group propose."

Customers' chance to win £500 in pub chain recipe contest

CUSTOMERS at a West Lancashire hostelry are being invited to cook up a recipe for success in a national competition with the chance to win a £500 prize.

The Stanley Gate, part of the Chef & Brewer chain, is calling on local 'foodies' to share their best family dish.

Regulars at the pub in Ormskirk Road, Bickerstaffe are invited to come up with a delicious, home-cooked recipe to be added to its menu, with the winner also bagging a £500 cash prize.

Closing date for entries is Monday, February 26. For more details about how to enter go to www.chefandbrewer.com/seasonedwithlove.

Erica's fired up for London Marathon challenge

Report by **Henry James**

FORMER Champion reporter Erica Dillon is set to take part in this year's London Marathon to raise funds for The Fire Fighters Charity.

This will be the 39-year-old's 10th marathon and she is hoping to raise £2,000 for the cause when she lines up in the 40,000-strong field for the famous event on Sunday, April 22.

As part of her fundraising efforts, Erica, who worked for the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service on the World Firefighters Games in 2008, has organised a multi-terrain trail run through the Formby Pinewoods on Sunday, February 18.

The Woodland Womble will start and finish at MeCycle next to Ainsdale railway station with runners assembling at 10am for a 10.30am start.

Three routes have been planned to cover five, seven or nine miles so participants can choose their preferred distance. Suggested donation is £5.

Erica said: "This is going to be a very special year for me. London will be my 10th marathon and just weeks after I turn 40 and a decade since I worked on the World Firefighters Games - so it's the perfect time to give something back.

Privilege

"Firefighters put their lives on the line every single day, so it will be a real honour and privilege to represent The Fire Fighters Charity at the London Marathon."

Anyone wanting more information about sponsoring Erica or taking part in the Woodland Womble can contact her on 07990 501558 or by email at ericadillon1978red@hotmail.co.uk.

Erica takes a break from training on Crosby beach

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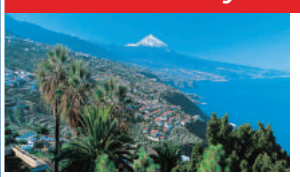

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13th July 2018, 9 nights
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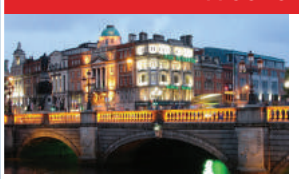

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Goodison treat for Blues fan Eric

LIFELONG Everton fan Eric Lupton enjoyed a nostalgic visit to the club's Goodison Park ground as part of a care home's 'Live Your Dream' project.

Management at the Hillcroft Residential Home in Long Lane, Aughton launched the scheme last month aimed at helping residents achieve their wishes in 2018.

And 87-year-old Eric was delighted when they arranged a guided tour for him of his beloved Blues' famous stadium.

Activities and events co-ordinator at Hillcroft, Megan Campbell, said: "Eric had a great day learning about the history of his favourite team and their achievements over the years.

"He was joined by his daughter Ruth for the day and also enjoyed telling us of his many memories of going to Goodison to watch the team play."

It's more than 20 years since Everton's FA Cup win but Eric and daughter Ruth posed with a replica of the famous old trophy during the visit to Goodison Park

Sanctuary's problem is black and white!

STAFF at a West Lancashire animal charity are being faced with a 'colour bar' with a difference.

But the problem for the team at Woodlands Animal Sanctuary in Holmeswood is nothing to do with discrimination - they are simply struggling to find homes for their black and black-and-white cats!

While furry felines of various other colours are being snapped up by loving new owners, the black and black-and-white brigade are being left behind.

The animal sanctuary is struggling to re-home its black and white cats

Sally McDerby from the Sandy Lane sanctuary said: "We are once again in a position where we have predominantly black and black-and-white cats, having to watch while other colours of cats are moving on to their own loving home while these beautiful cats are bypassed simply because of their colour.

"It takes us around four times longer to re-home black and black-and-white cats than any other colour!

"And as well as being a shame for the cats, it also means we have to continue to look after them so can't take in any other cats in need of rescue because of a lack of space!

"If you think you have space in your heart and your home for one of these lovely, sweet cats please contact the team by calling 01704 823293."

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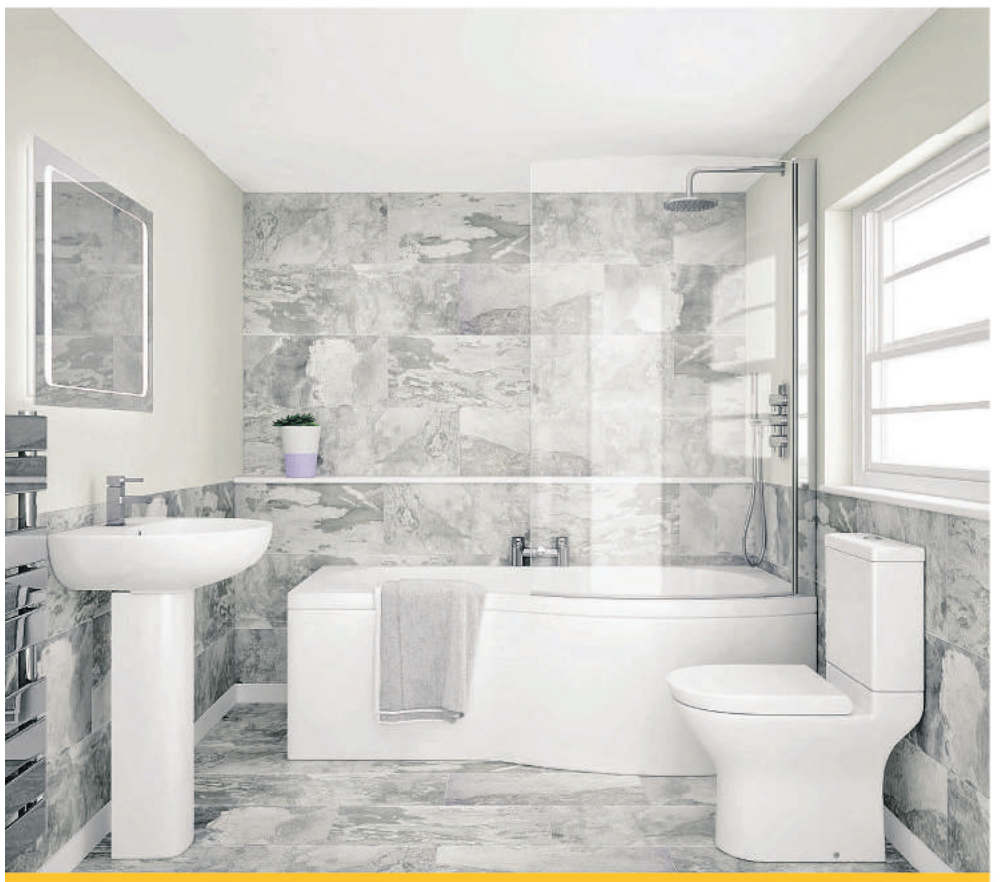

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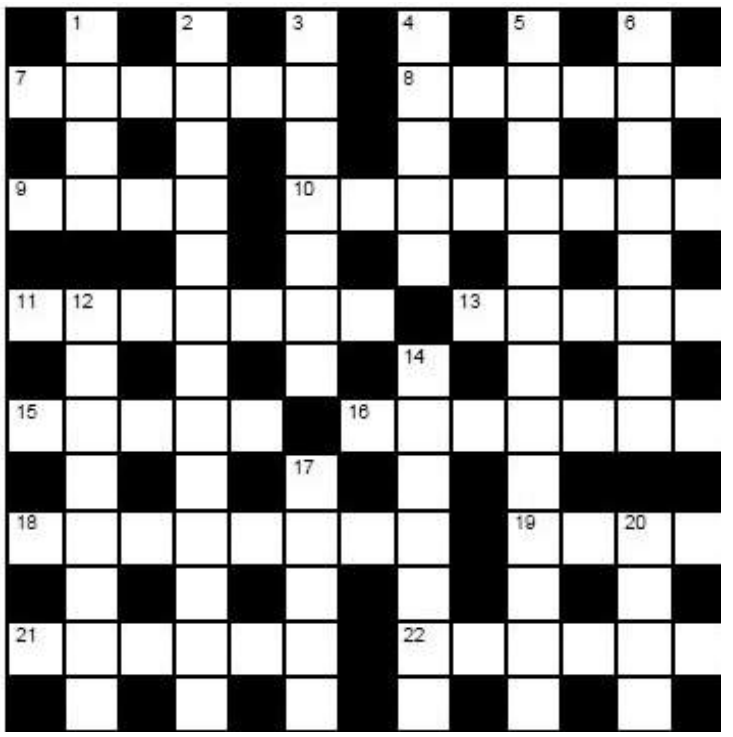

Last week's solutions:

Across: 7. Homage. 8. Air-con. 9. Bail. 10. Industry. 11. Feeling. 13. Giddy. 15. Funny. 17. Kingdom. 20. Bullfrog. 21. Heel. 22. Legume. 23. Amazon.

Down: 1. Lovage. 2. Tail. 3. Defiant. 4. Cards. 5. Frosting. 6. Horrid. 12. Linoleum. 14. Dingbat. 16. Unused. 18. Ocelot. 19. Dried. 21. Head.

ACROSS

7. Stroke gently or lovingly (6)
8. The digit zero (6)
9. A type of oven typically used for for baking or drying pottery (4)
10. An act of washing oneself (8)
11. Second month of autumn in the Northern hemisphere (7)
13. Replace or repair machinery, equipment, and fittings (5)
15. Put into practice (5)
16. Baked dessert of thin rolled-up pastry with a fruit filling (7)
18. A legislator (8)
19. Passenger vehicle powered by electricity conveyed by overhead cables (4)
21. Abbreviated term for a driving aid combining mapping and location data (3, 3)
22. Disorderly and disruptive (6)

DOWN

1. Motor vehicle licensed to carry fare-paying passengers (4)
2. Act of strengthening (13)
3. Absconder (7)
4. The joint connecting the foot with the leg (5)
5. Come up to expectations, reach the required standard (3, 3, 7)
6. Halogen element, atomic number 17, a toxic, irritant, pale-green gas (8)
12. Bright red mineral consisting of mercury sulphide, sometimes used as a pigment (8)
14. One of a pair of flat-based loops attached to the side of a horse's saddle to support a rider's foot (7)
17. Avoid work or duty, shirk (5)
20. A state formally co-operating with another for military or other purposes (4)

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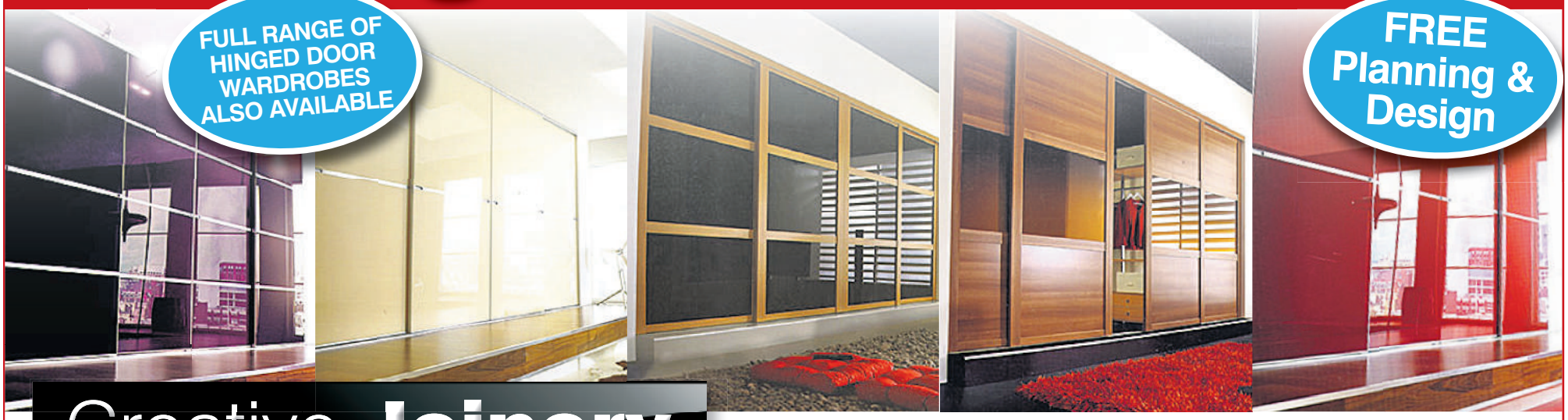

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Picture House release new season of films

HELPERS at PARBOLD Picture House have released the details of the listing of films and NT Transmissions at the venue over the next three months.

People can see the film Victoria and Abdul on Sunday, February 18. It is directed by Stephen Frears and it stars Judi Dench and Ali Fazal. The film is set in 1887 and it is about an Indian man who joins Queen Victoria's household staff.

On Thursday, February 22 at 7pm the National Theatre production of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is being shown. The play is an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' twentieth century masterpiece and it stars Sienna Miller and Jack O'Connell.

The Death of Stalin is being shown on Sunday, March 4 at 7pm and it is directed by Armando Iannucci. It stars Jason Isaacs, Steve Buscemi, and Simon Russell Beale. This film is set in Russia in 1953 and it features Stalin, who has a stroke and the courtiers scramble for power and hurl insults with the world at stake.

People can see Studio Kino – Film Extra on Sunday, March 11, 25 and April 8 at 7pm. This is a series of classic foreign films.

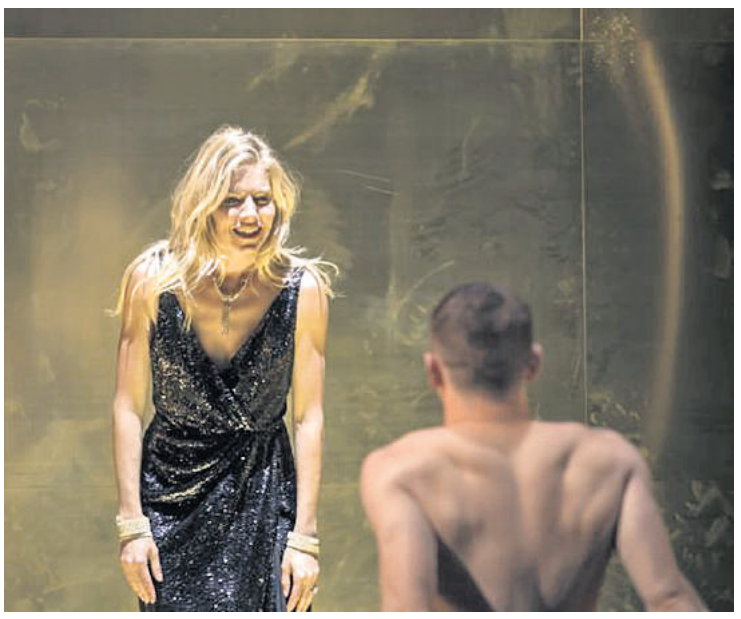
Then on Sunday, March 18 at 7pm Wind River is being screened. The film is directed and written by Taylor Sheridan, who won the Best Director at Cannes last year. The film stars Elizabeth Olsen, Jeremy Renner and Gil Birmingham. In this film a rookie FBI agent and a wildlife officer investigate a murder on a Wyoming Native American Reservation.

There is a National Theatre presentation of Julius Caesar on Thursday, March 22 at 7pm. It stars Ben Whishaw (Skyfall) as Brutus, and David Morrissey (The Walking Dead) as Mark Antony.

Then on Sunday, April 1 people can see Goodbye Christopher Robin. It is directed by Simon Curtis and stars Domhnall Gleeson, Margot Robbie and Kelly MacDonald.

Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool is being presented on Sunday, April 15 at 7pm. It is directed by Paul McGuigan and stars Annette Bening and Jamie Bell. This is the true story of film star Gloria Grahame's love story in Liverpool.

On Sunday, April 29 Loving Vincent can be seen. It is directed by Hugh Welchman and Dorota Kobiela. It stars Douglas Booth, Helen McCrory, and Jerome Flynn. Each of the 65,000 frames is an oil painting on canvas. It looks into the mystery surrounding Vincent Van Gogh's death in France.



Sienna Miller (Maggie) and Jack O'Connell (Brick) - Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Picture by Johan Persson

Join The Little Mix Experience

The Little Mix Experience is coming to Southport Theatre

JOIN The Little Mix Experience for a jam-packed concert of one of the X Factor's finest exports, at the Southport Theatre this Saturday (February 10) at 6pm.

Four talented girls pay tribute to the girl band, with dance moves, and replica costumes. Bursting with personality, this is a high-energy show from beginning to end.

The Little Mix Experience bring you all of Little Mix's greatest hits including: DNA, Wings, Salute, Black Magic, Love Me Like You, Secret Love Song and many, many more.

The show is by Sweeney Entertainments, which was co-founded by Julie and Peter Sweeney. Julie said: "The Little Mix Experience faithfully recreates Little Mix's greatest hits, emulating the style, sound and dance moves in a concert environment that is suitable for all ages.

Shannan Cairns, performer (as Perrie Edwards), choreographer and creative director for The Little Mix Experience, added: "The audience can expect a high energy show for all the family to enjoy. All the hits from Little Mix from the very beginning until now, along with replicate dance routines and costumes. It really is the full Little Mix."

Meanwhile The Fron Male Voice Choir (pronounced Vron) - one of the best known male voice choirs in the UK can be seen in the Floral Hall on the same evening at 7.30pm.

henry.james@champnews.com

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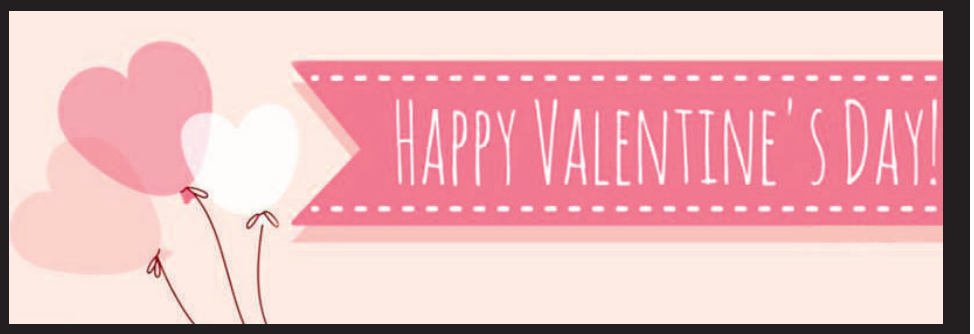

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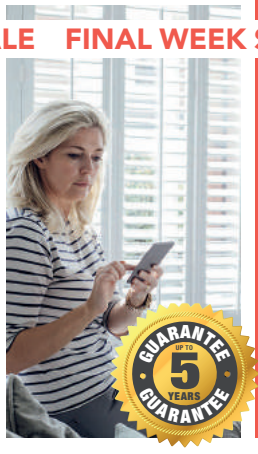

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MISC

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- Back Lane, Course Lane, New Acres, Sandy Close, Sandy Lane, Tears Lane

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- Brandreth Delph, Brandreth Park, Croasdale Drive, Lancaster Lane, Miry Lane, Park Close, Stoney Lane, The Delph

RUFF LANE
- Bewcastle drive, riff Lane, St. James Close, Varlian Close, Vicarage Close, Vicarage Lane, Wellfield Lane, Whiteleys Lane, Whitleys Lane

DIGMOOR
- Bearncroft, Beechwood Court

LITTLE DIGMOOR
- Abbeystead, Abbeywood, Acregate

OLD SKELMERSDALE
- Liverpool Road, Waldron, Waverley, Welbourne, West Park Close, Westgate

ASHURST
- Langtree, Lindens
- Lambourne, Larkhill, Lyndhurst

BIRCH GREEN
- Inglewhite
- Inskip, Inskip Court, Irwell

ELMERS GREEN
- Eastleigh, Elmers Green, Elmers Green Lane, Evington, Feltons Mews

TANHOUSE
- Beacon Green, Earlswood, Eavesdale, Edenhurst

UPHOLLAND
- Bardsley Close, Heaton Close, Ormskirk Road, Ravenhead Drive, The Dell
- Alma Close, Alma Court, Alma Hill, Alma Parade, Alma Road, Alma Walk, Brookfield Road, Douglas Avenue, Green Haven, Hall Green, Hall Green Close, Heatherlea Close, Tower Hill Road, Wellcross Road,

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF PROPOSAL
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(LIVERPOOL ROAD SOUTH, LORDSGATE DRIVE, UNNAMED ROAD OPPOSITE LORDSGATE DRIVE, BURSCOUGH, WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH) (PROHIBITION OF WAITING AT ANY TIME) ORDER 201*

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Lancashire County Council propose to make the above Traffic Regulation Order under Sections 1, 2 and 4 to the **Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984**, as amended, the effect of which will be to:

1. Introduce prohibition of waiting, at any time, on any day, in the following lengths of roads:

a) Liverpool Road South, Burscough, both sides from a point 61 metres north of the centreline of Higgins Lane for a distance of 240 metres in a southerly direction.

b) Lordsgate Drive, Burscough, both sides from the centreline of Liverpool Road South for a distance of 36 metres in an easterly direction

c) Unnamed Road Opposite Lordsgate Drive, Burscough, both sides from the centreline of Liverpool Road South for a distance of 51 metres in a westerly direction

A copy of the draft Order and associated documents for proposing to make the Order may be inspected during normal office hours at the offices of West Lancashire Borough Council, PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DF and at the offices of The Director of Corporate Services, Lancashire County Council, Christ Church Precinct, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ, and on Lancashire County Councils Website http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel/roads/roadworks-and-traffic-regulation-orders/permanent.aspx. Any representations or objections (specifying the grounds on which they are made) relating to the proposal must be made in writing and should be sent to The Director of Corporate Services, Lancashire County Council, P O Box 78, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ or by e-mail to tro-consultation@lancashire.gov.uk **quoting ref:LSG4\894.5797\HL1** before the 07 March 2018.

Laura Sales, Director of Corporate Services
07 February 2018

www.lancashire.gov.uk

Lancashire County Council

West Lancashire Borough Council
Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Article 15

APPLICATION(S) AFFECTING A CONSERVATION AREA / LISTED BUILDING

Application No: 2017/0869/OUT Outline planning permission for development of the site for 27 dwellings including details of access, layout and scale with all other matters reserved at Toppings Farm, 20 Plox Brow, Tarleton.

Application No: 2017/0971/FUL Widen driveway access to the property at The Chase, Flash Lane, Rufford.

Application No: 2017/1335/FUL Change of use of land and building to private stabling (including construction of menage, fences and midden) together with continued use of existing access track and demolition of existing concrete inspection pits and restoration of the land thereafter at Stand Farm, Spa Lane, Lathom.

Application No: 2018/0045/FUL Replacement of existing detached dwelling with 4 bedroom detached dwelling with integral double garage at 3 Woodlands Close, Ormskirk.

Application No: 2018/0074/FUL Alteration to existing openings to rear elevation of existing hotel and replacement of windows at first floor level to Chequer Close elevation at Lancashire Manor Hotel, Prescott Road, East Pimbo, Up Holland.

Application No: 2018/0075/LBC Listed Building Consent - Alteration to existing openings to rear elevation of existing hotel and replacement of windows at first floor level to Chequer Close elevation at Lancashire Manor Hotel, Prescott Road, East Pimbo, Up Holland.

Application No: 2018/0077/FUL Erection of 2.4m high palisade perimeter security fencing adjacent to and (in part) attached to the Listed Building (retrospective) at St Josephs Conference Centre, College Road, Up Holland.

Application No: 2018/0078/LBC Listed Building Consent - Erection of 2.4m high palisade perimeter security fencing adjacent to and (in part) attached to the Listed Building (retrospective) at St Josephs Conference Centre, College Road, Up Holland.

Application No: 2018/0083/FUL Porch to front elevation at 36 Liverpool Road, Rufford.

The applications are available for viewing on the Council's website www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning. Alternatively, the application can be viewed during normal office hours at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk and at 1st Floor, The Concourse, Skelmersdale. If you wish to comment on the proposal you can do so via the Council's web site, by e.mail to plan.apps@westlancs.gov.uk or in writing to Development and Regeneration Services, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, but these must be received within 21 days of the date of this notice quoting the application no. Any comments made will be available for public inspection.

Applications for Minor Commercial and Householder Development

In the event that an appeal is made against a decision of the Council to refuse to grant planning permission for the proposed development, and that appeal then proceeds by way of the expedited procedure under the written representations procedure, any representations made to the Council about an application will be passed to the Secretary of State and there will be no opportunity to make further representations.

John R Harrison DipEnvP., MRTPI Director of Development and Regeneration
Dated: 7th February 2018
PDNOT984

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PUBLIC NOTICES

WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL SEEKS EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
A Café / Bistro service provider for the Chapel Gallery

The Council is currently seeking expressions of interest in the provision of a café / bistro and hospitality provider for the Chapel Gallery in Ormskirk.

During the last two years the gallery has undergone a major programme of refurbishment that has resulted in the relocation of the café from the back of the facility to the front. The café now boasts provision for more than 70 covers, it provides an ambient seating area and a well equipped servery and kitchen.

This is an exciting time for the facility, with access to free WI–FI and the planned installation of digital equipment to enable film, digital media and animation, alongside the more traditional exhibitions and events.

The council will be seeking a new provider to start in April 2018 and will be undertaking a tender exercise for replacement contracts.

Suitably experienced and qualified catering providers are invited to provide an expression of interest. Details can be viewed and downloaded from The Chest internet tendering portal at www.the-chest.org.uk

Specific enquiries may be addressed to: Ms Helen Juste, Arts Development Manager, West Lancashire Borough Council Chapel Gallery St Helens Road Ormskirk Lancashire, L39 4QR.

Tel: **01695 571328** / **01695 571306** Email: **helen.juste@westlancs.gov.uk**

Dated: **31st January 2018**

West Lancashire Borough Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 2DF www.westlancs.gov.uk

See our Picture of the Week on page 16

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IN MEMORIAM

ZAC TAYLOR

11th February 2016

2 long years

A ray of sunshine
came and went,
a beautiful treasure
only lent,
in God's keeping
quietly sleeps,
our Zac
(our sunshine)
we loved but could
not keep.
Love and miss you
forever and always,
Nan and Grandad
XX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WYNNE DAVID

Lorraine would like to thank everyone who attended David's funeral service, for the kind messages of sympathy, floral tributes and donations received for Willowbrook and Queenscourt Hospice's in memory of David and the support given at this sad time, it has been quite overwhelming and very much appreciated. Special thanks to Dr Eithne Macrae, the district nurses, Rev'd Janet Heighton and Skelmersdale Funeral Service.

Want to place a family announcement?
Visit **champnews.com**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GORE ANDREW

Maureen and family would like to thank everyone who attended Andrew's funeral, the support shown was overwhelming and of great comfort to us all.

Special thanks to Father David, Lesley, the choir and all of those who helped in the church to make the service a special occasion.

We would also like to give a special thank you to the staff at both Royal Preston and Royal Blackburn Hospitals for the excellent care for Andrew during his 18 weeks in hospital. Thank you also goes to the staff at Hurlston Hall for their hard work which helped the wake run smoothly.

A big thank you also to Dave and Claire at Newland & Wilkinson Independent Funeral Directors who showed the family compassion, caring and took very good care of Andrew **"Our of Main Man"**. Finally thank you for all the kind donations to the Magic Fund.

To place a family announcement please call 01704 392392

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EDDEN CATHERINE

Mike, Jason, Graham, Neil and Mathew would like to express their sincere thanks to all relatives, friends and work colleagues who supported the family on their sad loss of Cathy with messages of condolence and attendance of a beautiful and uplifting celebration of Cathy's life conducted at St Paul's Church by the Reverend Chris Spittle. Also to Melanie and her team at Hardman Funeral Directors for their friendly, dignified and professional services.

SEDDON BARBARA

20th January 2018

Linda and Philip would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their support and sympathy during the recent sad loss of their Mother. Grateful thanks to everyone who attended the funeral service and kindly sent donations for the Alzheimer's Society. Special thanks to staff at Stocks Hall Nursing Home in Burscough for their dedicated care of Barbara, to Reverend David Benge for stepping in to lead the funeral and to O'Brien's Tea Rooms for the lovely refreshments. Finally, a sincere thank you to Lisa Hunter of MLS Independent Funeral Directors for her care and compassion whilst dealing with the funeral arrangements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UNSWORTH KATHLEEN (Peggy)

Peggy's family would like to express their sincere thanks to all relatives and friends for their support during this sad time, thank you also to those that kindly donated to Carla Lane Animals In Need in lieu of flowers. Our heart felt thanks for the excellent care Peggy received at home from Lisa and carers at Assured Care and also latterly from Val and carers at the Abbendon Nursing Home. A special thank you to Reverend Marie-Anne Kent for her kind words of comfort and funeral service, also finally a grateful thank you to Derek Crawford at Howard's Funeral Directors for their kind and professional funeral arrangements.

WARRILOW GRAHAM

Carol, Ceri, Beth and family would like to thank all who have supported them during this sad time. Thank you for all the sympathy cards, messages of condolence and donations for Lathom & Burscough old people's club and Queenscourt Hospice. Thank you to Lathom House Surgery and the District Nurses, to John Milton for a lovely service, and to Sally Hunter and all at MLS Independent Funeral Directors for their caring and professional service, and thanks also to The Country Florist, Lathom and Briars Hall.

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Announcements

DEATHS

PAGLIARULO GENNARO (Geno)

Passed away at Southport Hospital on 26th January 2018 Aged 84 years of Hoscar

Dearly loved Husband of Maria. Much loved Dad of Gina, Michael and Raffaele. Dear Father In Law of Liz and Marie. Loving Grandad of Lucia, Rachel, Marianna and Michael.
Funeral Mass will be held at St. John R.C Church, Burscough, On Friday 9th February 2018 at 10:30am. Followed by Interment in Italy at a later date.
Family flowers only by request, but donations are being gratefully received for The British Heart Foundation.
Donations and further enquiries please to Lisa Hunter MLS Independent Funeral Directors 22a Liverpool Road North, Burscough Tel: 01704 891555

MORLEY AMELIA Nee Fagerass (Emily)

Devoted Wife of Tom (Deceased) died February 1st 2018 Peacefully and surrounded by her family at Roby House

Much-beloved Daughter of Mary and James (deceased)
Much-loved by her surviving Sisters Joan and Brenda
"Our Emily - She's on her own" always full of fun and always full of love. And her (Deceased) Sisters Queenie, Maud, Aggie, Delphine and Florine. Proud, Protective and devoted Aunt of all her Nieces and Nephews, Great Nieces and Nephews and her Great, Great Nieces and Nephews. "We love you Aunty Em - always and forever".
Requiem Mass on Tuesday 13th February at 12.00 noon at Holy Family Church, Ince Blundell followed by Committal at Thornton Crematorium.
Emily's family extend a warm invitation to join them afterwards at the Hightown Cricket Club to celebrate her life.
"Always a Holy Cross Girl"
Flowers welcomed.
Any enquiries to Coyne Bros Funeral Directors, 3 Old Mill Lane, Formby L37 3PE Tel. 01704 873899

DEATHS

PUGH DAVID MICHAEL

28th January 2018 Peacefully at his home in Skelmersdale aged 78 years

The dearly loved Husband of Beryl, loving Dad of David and Tim, dear Father In Law of Lauren an devoted Grandad of Olivia.
All enquires to Melanie Hardman at H. Hardman & Co., Independent Family Funeral Directors of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk & Scarisbrick Tel: 01695 722122/720012

BEST AGNES

On 4th February 2018 Peacefully in hospital Aged 87 years

Loving Wife of the late Ted, devoted Mum of Edward, Steven and Lesley, dear Mother in law of Collette, Pauline and Dave, cherished Nan of Kelly, Lee, Stevie, Lauren, Natalie, Kellie and Danielle. Will be sadly missed by all her family and friends. Funeral Service will take place at West Lancashire Crematorium on Monday 12th February at 10.00am. All enquiries to Margaret Whitelam Skelmersdale Funeral Service 29/31 Sandy Lane. Tel: 01695 559868

HAWKINS JAMES (Jimmy)

on 28th January 2018 Peacefully in Avalon Care Home with his family by his side aged 88 years

Reunited with his beloved Wife Pauline, much loved Dad of Janice and Julie, dear Father In Law of Geoff and loving Grandad of Ian, Joanna and Natalie.
Funeral service and Committal will take place at Southport Crematorium on Thursday 8th February at 12:00 noon. Family flowers only by request, donations if so desired for Alzheimer's Society.
Donations and further enquiries please to M. Rushton Funeral Directors, 100 Marshside Road, Southport, PR9 9TG. Tel: 01704 214118.

DEATHS

HARDWICK LISA

Death 22/01/2018

We've shared laughter
We've shared tears
From life's hardships,
to life's happiness
Our stupid fights,
Our silly nights. No
one can replace our
special bond sis.
Reunited with our
Leonie .xx
Love always your
broken hearted
brother Rob,Alison.
Josh&Charl xx

WHITTLE JOE

Passed Away 24th January 2018

Loving Son of Jane & Keith, Brother to Rozz, Michelle & Annabelle and Uncle to Ruby-Jane.

Funeral Service to take place at West Lancashire Crematorium on Friday 16th February at 1pm.

Please come dressed as if having a night out with Joe.

Family Flowers only however donations are kindly being received for MIND.

Further enquiries to Newland & Wilkinson Independent Funeral Directors 311 Hesketh Lane, Tarleton, PR4 6RJ. Telephone 01772 811165

HARDWICK LISA MICHELLE

22nd January 2018 Aged 45 years

Much loved Mum to Leonie, Josef and Frankie. Loving Daughter, Sister and Auntie. Will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.
Funeral service at St Paul's Church Thursday 8th February at 12:00pm.
Followed by Burial at Liverpool Road Cemetery, Skelmersdale
Enquiries to Devonport Funeral Service Tel: 01695 731199

DEATHS

FISHER VALERIE

January 20th 2018 Peacefully in Hospital

Reunited with her beloved Husband Jeffrey. Mother of Amanda, Timothy and Heather and Grandmother to her seven Grandchildren.
Funeral Service at St Michaels Church Blundellsands on Monday February 12th 2018 at 1:45pm.
Family flowers only please but if desired donations to The Salvation Army or RSPB.
C/o H.Leslie Humphrey 69 Liverpool Road, Crosby L23 5SE Tel: 0151 924 4805

WILLIAMS DOROTHY

January 24th 2018 Peacefully in Hospital Aged 100 years

Will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.
Service and Cremation at Thornton Crematorium on Friday 9th February 2018 at 12:40pm.
Family flowers only please but if desired donations to Guide Dogs for the Blind.
C/o H.Leslie Humphreys, 69 Liverpool Road, Crosby, L23 5SE Tel: 0151 924 4805

FRITH FRANK (FRED)

Passed away peacefully at Southport Hospital on 27th January 2018 aged 82 years of Aughton.

Funeral Service on Monday 12th February 2018 at 1.45pm, at West Lancs Crematorium, Pippin Street, Burscough, Ormskirk, Lancs L40 7SP.
Family flowers only by request, but donations are being gratefully received for Faith Welfare Trust and Lily Foundation.
Donations and further enquiries please to Anabel Hunter, 20 Moss Delph Lane, Aughton. Tel: 01695 424888

DEATHS

EDGAR (BOLTON) TRUDY

Passed away peacefully at Hillcroft Nursing Home on 30th January 2018 Aged 88 years of Ormskirk

Much loved Mum of Ann, Peter and Pauline. Dear Mother in law of Alistair and Andrew. Loving Nan of Mandy, James, Philip & Alison. Great Nan to her Great Grandchildren. Loved and missed by all her family and friends. Funeral Service at West Lancs Crematorium on Wednesday 14th February at 10.45am. Family flowers only by request, donations are being gratefully received for Breast Cancer Care.
Donations and further enquiries please to Lisa Hunter MLS Independent Funeral Directors, 20 Moss Delph Lane, Aughton. Tel 01695 424888.

WILLIAMS PAULINE

28th January 2018 Peacefully in Hospital Aged 74 years of Upholland

The dearly loved Wife of the late David, loving Mum of David, Sharon and Tracy, dear Mother-In-Law of James and devoted Nan to all her Grand and Great Grandchildren.
Funeral service at St Helens Crematorium on Wednesday 7th February 2018 at 10:30am. All enquiries to Melanie Hardman at H Hardman & Co., Independent Family Funeral Directors of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk & Scarisbrick. Tel: 01695 722122/720012

ROBERTS BARBARA MAY

2nd February 2018 Aged 96 years

Reunited with her beloved Husband John. Dear Mum to Gill and loving Gran to Jonathan and Christopher.
Service at Southport Crematorium on Monday 19th February at 11:20am.
Family flowers only please, but if desired donations are being gratefully received for Cancer Research UK.
Donations and enquiries to Howard's Funeral Directors, 1-5 Roe Lane, Southport, PR9 9DR. Telephone: 01704 500086.

DEATHS

FRANCE INA

22nd January 2018 After a short illness peacefully in Hospital aged 95 years

Much loved Wife of the late Richard France. Dear Mother of John and Tim. Dear Mother-In-Law of Barbara.
Loving Grandma to all her Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren.
Ina will be sadly missed by all her family, friends and all who knew her.
Funeral service will take place at St John the Baptist, Burcough on Thursday 15th February 2018 at 1:30pm followed by an interment in the churchyard.
Family flowers only by request please but the family are gratefully receiving donations for The Stroke Association.
Further enquiries please to Cookson Tyrer Funeral Directors, 2 Smithy Walk, Burscough, Lancashire L40 5UU Tel: 01704 897770

KERSHAW MARGARET

25th January 2018 Peacefully in Hospital Aged 88 years

Much loved Wife of David. Beloved Mum of Julie & Stephen. Dear Mother In Law of Andi. Loving Sister of Mary, Anne & Jean.
Sister In Law of Bob & Joe. Will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.
Service and Crematorium at Thornton Crematorium on Friday 23rd February at 12 noon.
All flowers & enquiries to David Clegg Independent Funeral Service, 77-79 Bridge Road, Litherland. Tel: 0151 928 6665

WALKER SYDNEY (SYD)

On 25th January 2018 Peacefully in hospital Aged 86 years

Beloved Husband of Elma, Dad of Cheryl, Syd, David, Pamela, Michael and Debbie, Father in law of Christine and Christopher, Grandad of Stephen, Simon, Caroline, Matthew, Bryony, Luke, David, Becky, Nicola, Laura and Sarah, and a Great Grandad and Great Great Grandad.
Funeral Service and Committal took place at West Lancashire Crematorium on Monday 5th February at 1:00pm. Donations if so desired for Cancer Research UK. Donations and further enquiries please to M. Rushton Funeral Directors, 100 Marshside Road, Southport, PR9 9TG, Tel. 01704 214118.

DEATHS

JACKSON LILY

31st January 2018 Age 89 Peacefully in hospital after a very short illness.

Beloved wife of the late Tom much loved Mum, Nan & Great Nan.
Service on Monday 12th February 2018 at 10:45am at West Lancs Crematorium, L40 7SP.
Donations if desired to go to Dementia U.K.
Enquires to H.Hardman & Co 01695 72212/720012

JACKSON LILIAN

31st January 2018

Close in our hearts
You will always stay
Loved and
remembered every
day.
We will miss and love
you forever Mum.

Love from Kenny, Carol, Tony, Lee and Jennie

xxxxx

JACKSON LILY

I cant believe i'm writing this Nan,i thought you would be here forever!
Will never forget your cheeky smile and wicked sense of humour!
Will miss you more than you will ever know.
Finally back with my Grand.
Your Biddy,Billy,Alfie and Danny

XXXX

SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE?
Call 01704 392392

DEATHS

JACKSON LILY

Age nearly 90!!

Oh Mum i cant believe this we never said goodbye.
You were gone before we knew it and we've no idea why.
Sweet dreams to our One and only Lilo Lil.

Love you all the world Mum

Love Linda,John and Tom.
XXX

JACKSON LILIAN

31st January 2018

Deepest sympathy to all the Jackson family
"She was a lovely lady"
from
Sandra & Steve Bradbury and family

MELLOR NICHOLAS BRIAN (NICK)

30th January 2018 Passed away suddenly but peacefully in Hospital aged 45 years formerly of Ormskirk

Dearly loved Son of Brian and Eileen, much loved Brother of Charlotte and Jamie and loving Uncle to Annabelle and William. For Funeral arrangements and further enquiries please contact Sally Hunter MLS Independent Funeral Directors, 20 Moss Delph Lane, Aughton. Tel: 01695 424 888

MARSH LES

Suddenly but peacefully at home on 25th January 2018 aged 86 years

Beloved Husband of Enid, dear Brother of Annie and Brother In Law of Ivan, Mildred and Graham.
He will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.
The Funeral service will take place at St Helens Crematorium on Wednesday 21st February at 12 noon.
Family flowers only please, donations if desired to a charity to be decided. For all enquiries please contact the Funeral Director.
R Banks and Son Funerals Ltd, 758-768 Ormskirk Road, Pemberton, Wigan, WN5 8BB Tel: 01942 222156

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Friday 2nd February 2018

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£250..... Mrs Kelly, Crosby
£100.....Mrs Dutton, Southport
Plus 15 other winners of £10 each

LOTTERY RESULTS

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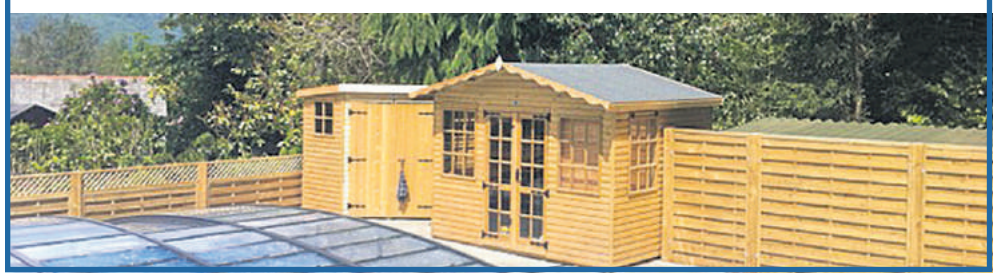

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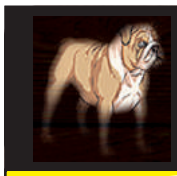

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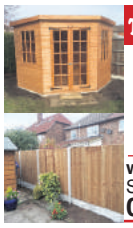

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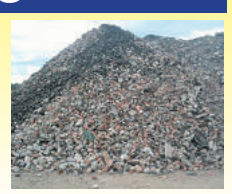

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IF you are under the age of 50 then chances are that Lister is the protagonist of space sitcom Red Dwarf.

So that means copious amounts of curry, brilliant put-downs and laundry baskets ignored for so long that they've developed their own ecosystems.

But if you grew up in the era of Sir Stirling Moss giving Johnny Foreigner a thoroughly good drubbing on the world's race circuits and grainy mono newsreels, then Lister was a force to be reckoned with in sports car racing. It dominated the Sports Car Club of America's national championships in 1958 and 1959, for instance, but unless you've been to the Goodwood Revival lately I'd understand if you failed to bat an eyelid.

But there is another side to Lister's history – one which, I'm delighted to say, is about to make a comeback. The one which involves giving Jaguars monstrously powerful engines and wonderfully unsubtle bodykits.

Nearly 20 years ago I was actually lucky to visit Lister's old factory and was completely won over by the line of black Jaguar XJSs that'd been kitted out with 7.0-litre V12s and huge spoilers. Its star offering at the time was the faintly ludicrous Storm, a GT racer that battled Ferrari F40s and McLaren F1s for race victory but cost so much in roadgoing form that the company made a whopping four for very rich (and brave) petrolheads.

You'd think the Storm would've put Lister off making flashy new cars – for the last few years it's been building recreations of its 1950s classics instead – but now it's giving it another go by cranking the Jaguar F-Type's performance up to cartoonish levels. Not only has it given the svelte two-seater the much cooler Lister Thunder moniker, but it's also treated it to plenty of custom-made carbonfibre bits, a cabin retrimmed in leather even more expensive than the stuff Jaguar uses, and the supercharged V8's been tweaked and fiddled with to the point that it now pumps out 666bhp. So obviously the performance is going to be demonic.

The Thunder's a bit like Red Dwarf - I'm fully aware that it's a very acquired taste and half of my mates hate it, but I'm completely hooked. It must be a Lister thing.

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Linnets fight back to score late winner

Burscough 2
Hanley Town 1

BURSCOUGH produced a spirited fightback to beat the promotion chasers from the Potteries with a late winner.

The Linnets were fortunate to only be a goal down at the interval but they took full advantage of that by producing a second-half show that was a mirror image of the first half, grasping victory with an 86th minute goal from Alex Parkes.

Hanley had been the better team during the first-half and they were buoyed by taking the lead after only six minutes via their captain, Theo Stair.

The Linnets were simply a different team in the second-half and could easily have levelled matters before they did via Chad Whyte in the 55th minute. Hanley were still a danger though and but for a brave block by Rex Kimona-Puissance they would surely have restored their lead.

The Burscough winner came four minutes from time, Terry Cummings made one of his trademark runs at the heart of the opposition defence putting the defenders on the back foot, he was tripped and referee Ian Gittins awarded a penalty.

Alex Parkes stepped up to do the honours and Burscough had captured three valuable points.

The win was important for the Linnets and maintained their position in 17th place in the North West Counties Premier Division table and fends off the chasing pack.

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Skem can't break down ten-man Bridge but are happy to settle for point

Bamber Bridge 0
Skelmersdale United 0

SKELMERSDALE made the short run up the M6 to take on a team who started the day just one point off the top of Evo-Stik Division One North, and they deservedly earned a share of the spoils, *writes Neil Leatherbarrow*.

Skem could well have taken an early lead.

After just a few seconds Jordan Darr went down the wing then cut inside only to see his low ball right across the face of goal but failed to get generate a finishing touch from Tyler Rufus or debut striker Tom Hulme.

In the third minute Hulme showed just why Dave Powell has thrown him straight into his line-up when he created an angle in the penalty area semi-circle before smashing a shot that home goalkeeper Lloyd Rigby just tipped over his crossbar.

This was followed up by a Jack Lenehan shot that fizzed over the Bridge crossbar and a Rigby save from a header.

In the 16th minute, Rufus cleared long, Hulme headed on and Darr was away on goal, outpacing his trailing marker Adam Dodd who cynically tripped Darr some 25 yards from goal.

The referee Matthew gave Dodd a red card and from the free-kick, Bridge had to thank keeper Rigby again, who pulled off a top-class tip over the bar from a thunderous Jack Fleming drive.

The sending off did change things as Bamber Bridge went to one up front.

Skelmersdale were still a danger and Mike Roddy picked out Rufus with a pin point pass, after a quick turn Rufus saw his shot charged down by keeper Rigby who was having a good game.

Jordan Darr is brought down by Adam Dodd when clear on goal. Picture by John Driscoll.

Gradually Bamber Bridge began to settle into a rhythm despite having only ten men.

The home side had a chance to take the lead from a penalty on 53 minutes when Regan Linney was tripped by Phil Mooney but Macauley Wilson's spot kick was comfortably saved by Roberts.

From the hour mark the game looked more and more likely to be goalless as ten man Bamber Bridge faded as an attacking force, while Skem pressed but their old problem of not being able to open defences up came to the fore and the home side had a particularly well organised one.

As added time beckoned substitute Bevan Burey cleverly created a shooting chance to Jack Lenehan but his effort went over the Bridge crossbar.

Two minutes into the extra period Bridge made one more attacking move, Waddecar doing well to twist his way out of a Josh Wardle tackle and he fed the ball through to an on the run Nightingale, Roberts was again quick to respond and dived at the Nightingale's feet the smother the danger.

Skem manager Dave Powell praised his goalkeeper Lee Callum Roberts and gave credit to his defence saying: "The back four were outstanding against some very quick, agile players and coped with them well, I am really pleased overall.

"Before the game I would have probably settled for a point against these away from home, they have had some really good results recently. We dug-in and kept the ball moving well when we were on the attack."

Powell appoints former Burscough boss as coach

SKELMERSDALE manager Dave Powell has brought former Burscough boss Chris Stammers onto his coaching staff, *writes Neil Leatherbarrow*.

Chris is well known in local footballing circles as an excellent coach and has a wealth of experience in and around Skelmersdale United's level.

Chris started out as reserve team manager at Burscough where he was also Derek Goulding's assistant manager and he was alongside Derek when the Linnets had their famous FA Cup run in 2005/06 knocking Gillingham out of the FA Cup at Victoria Park.

Chris went on to manage Clitheroe and then Burscough. He has also coached at a number of local clubs and has recently been manager of AFC Liverpool.

Powell said: "I am happy to have Chris on board with us, he brings huge experience at this level to the club, I am looking forward to working with him and building a good future for the club on the pitch."

Skem were due to face Colne last night (Tuesday, February 6) and they will take on the longest away trip of the season this Saturday when they travel up to Evo-Stik Division North leaders South Shields.

One additional boost they did receive was that club captain Liam Hollett won his appeal against a three match suspension incurred by a sending off in the game against Atherton Collieries.

Skem play Ossett Albion at Volair Park, Prescot, on Tuesday, February 13.

Burscough face a pair of trips to Manchester over the next couple of weekends, both of which carry the 'crucial' tag for the Linnets.

First Dave Sutton's team are away to Maine Road on Saturday, the club that traditionally played in the shadow of Manchester City are one place behind Burscough in the North-West Counties Premier Division table, only a point separating the sides.

When the two teams met at Victoria Park back in November it was an exciting encounter with both teams going all out to win. Burscough did win 2-1 and a tough game is expected.

Burscough have no midweek game next but are away to Abbey Hey on Saturday, February 17 who are based in the Gorton area of Manchester.

Chris Stammers during his time at AFC Liverpool

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